

51
48
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AGGRESSIVENESS:

A Critical Examination of the Concept of the Instinct of Pugnacity.¹

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"It is commonly thought that the only hope for the student of society is the acquisition of knowledge; more facts, and still more facts is the common catch-phrase. But what is really needed is more insight into what facts have been gained. The mere accumulation of knowledge in itself is of little use: what really is needed is some means of using that knowledge. The student should constantly try to group his facts into still wider generalisations, he should learn what is more and what is less essential, what is primary and what is derived; for he will only be able to acquire the necessary economy of thought by confining himself to what is really essential in the growth and development of human society."

W. J. Perry: "Children of the Sun."

I. INTRODUCTION.

Accurate thinking requires the use of accurate language; science, which seeks above all things to be precise, must confine itself to the use of terms which have an exact and verifiable connotation. It is on the score of failure to comply with this canon of science that our chief objection to the concept of the instinct of pugnacity is based.

No one can reasonably doubt that pugnacious behaviour is a widespread phenomenon amongst animal and human beings. What may (and, in our opinion, *must*) be doubted

¹This article represents a brief general survey, with special emphasis upon the last section (on the aggressive behaviour of children), of a thesis presented for the New Zealand University M.A. Examinations, November, 1935. The subject under discussion is one of vast scope, and no attempt is made here to deal with it exhaustively. Rather, the aim is to present this important question from a revised point of view.

is whether there is any real instinct of pugnacity, and whether such a concept is an aid to accurate thinking. Have men, for instance, an innate tendency to fight, or do they fight merely in self-defence, in defence of family and possessions, to gain property, or for a thousand and one other innate and acquired motives? And, if no such instinct, in the strict sense, can be satisfactorily demonstrated, is it not unscientific to make use of the term "instinct of pugnacity"?

A satisfactory answer to the first question can be given only after a critical examination of the concept of the instinct of pugnacity as it is understood by those who employ it. What does it mean? How is it used? Is it substantiated by the facts of observation and experiment? These questions we will endeavour to answer in the following pages.

We may provisionally state that the conclusion to which we have come as the result of our investigations is that this concept is most unsatisfactory as an explanation of man's aggressiveness. By those who employ it, it is offered as *the* explanation of all aggressive behaviour; variations from pugnacity in the strict sense (i.e., of physical fighting) are regarded merely as modifications of this primary instinct under the influence of a frustrating and restraining environment. We contend, however, that this concept does not in practice by any means fulfil its pretensions. It is not the only possible explanation of aggressive behaviour, nor can it explain *all* behaviour characteristically aggressive; *and by confusing forms of aggressiveness that are qualitatively as well as quantitatively distinct it gives rise to much loose thinking and loose generalising.*

Let us examine the evidence. The case for the instinct of pugnacity has been put forward by many writers, on many grounds. James, McDougall, Groos, Bovet, Cannon, Hocking, Drever, Shand, Kirkpatrick, Rivers, Maxwell, Garnett, Thouless, etc., variously accept and use this concept (although many of them label it differently, using such names as instinct of combativeness, instinct of aggression, fighting instinct,

anger, etc.). Moreover, many writers implicitly utilise the concept without explicitly acknowledging the fact.

Thus, we see that the concept of the pugnacious instinct has been extensively adopted and is used by many highly reputable psychological writers. Also, we may add, it is generally accepted as axiomatic by the layman. Many of the above writers have, of course, merely followed others in their use of the postulate, and Groos,⁽¹⁾ McDougall,⁽²⁾ and Bovet⁽³⁾ seem to be the only psychologists to have attempted anything like a sustained treatment of the pugnacious instinct. Again, many writers observe that pugnacious behaviour appears to be an instinctive form of activity, and simply assume that this implies an instinct of pugnacity.

On the other hand, Thorndike and others, for various reasons, reject the concept entirely. But the case *against* the instinct of pugnacity finds its chief support not in the field of academic Psychology, but in those of Ethnology and Child Psychology.

Singularly few attempts have been made to justify the instinctive character of the pugnacious motive, or, on the other hand, to distinguish between those aspects which are instinctive and those which form part of the social heritage. The whole matter requires a prolonged, detailed and intelligent study, based upon evidence from many different fields: from the comparative study of animals; from the comparative study of low-cultured human beings; from the study of available evidence concerning the habits of prehistoric peoples; from the observation of the behaviour of children (especially very young children); from the study of mental disorders involving aggressiveness; from the wider study in which human behaviour is regarded biologically in its relation to that of other animals; while still another line of approach is to be found in an intensive and extensive study of the nature and influence of the various social mechanisms by which human beings are patterned in social ways of behaving.

All the above fields of investigation are considered—some in greater detail than others—in the thesis from which this

article is extracted. Here we can examine only one of them: the evidence afforded by the scientific observation of the behaviour of children.

Although the problem of aggressiveness is greatly in need of further research, many of the chief difficulties in the way of a satisfactory solution have already been removed—if the investigator will only realise it. Social sciences as separate and distinct as Ethnology and Child Psychology have each made contributions towards destroying the myth and conjecture which together pass as a scientific explanation of the phenomena of pugnacity. On the one hand, the psychological argument which regards war as the direct product of the instinct of pugnacity will no longer bear investigation; it has been wholly discredited by the work of the leaders of the newer school of ethnologists (such as Elliot Smith, Perry, etc.) which has accumulated a great deal of evidence that all goes to prove that war did not occur among primitive peoples; indeed, as Plato and other Greek writers suspected long ago, war did not appear till there was plunder to be won by fighting, and then only by accident. This applies apparently both to the primitive races that have died out and to those of which we have direct experience.

On the other hand, observers of pugnacity as it can be observed in the behaviour of children have pointed out a dangerous fallacy in the argument of those who advocate the theory of the pugnacious instinct; viz., that it is unscientific to set two groups of factors like “instinct” and “environment”—of which we hear so much, even today—against each other as if mankind were limited to the necessity of choosing one set or the other. Watson's experiments on the first reactions of infants seem to indicate clearly enough that much of what was in the past considered instinctive must now be held to be due to the early fashioning of impulse by the conditions of its exercise.⁽⁴⁾ Or, as Dewey⁽⁵⁾ put it a generation ago, instincts are some of the forms that the impulses assume under the stresses of custom. The importance attached by Freud to the earliest impressions of life points

in the same direction, and these experiments and theoretical deductions have received support from the experience of those (like Susan Isaacs) who have tried out these views in the development of children under new methods of education. Thus, consideration of the environment that has been so long neglected—the social environment, man himself—necessitates a re-orientation of our thought, a re-evaluation of our data, and a re-definition of our working concepts.

We may now state our problem thus: *Is it necessary, in attempting to explain the phenomena of aggressiveness in the behaviour of children, to have recourse to the concept of an instinct of pugnacity?*

The method we propose to adopt in answering the above question is to examine the available evidence regarding childhood aggressiveness, evaluate the claim of each portion to scientific validity (using the accepted canons of scientific method as our criteria of value), and estimate the conclusion to which that evidence which can be accepted as scientific, points.

A survey of current usage makes it clear that there are implicit or explicit in the various treatments two different conceptualisings of the instinct of pugnacity (often not clearly distinguished). It is assumed to be either:

- (a) An instinct to fight for the sake of fighting, i.e., a need or craving of the organism.
- (b) An instinct to fight in response to the thwarting of any need, desire or interest, especially one with instinctive motivation.

In the following pages we shall consider both suggestions, and shall inquire if either, or both, interpretations are substantiated by sufficient evidence to warrant the explanation of aggressive behaviour as the result of an instinct of pugnacity.

Many observers have noticed that pugnacious behaviour seems to have an instinctive "flavour", that is, it seems to operate with a spontaneity strongly suggestive of the instinctive reaction, and they have immediately concluded that this

instinctive appearance is due to a pugnacious instinct. Now, we find no reason to doubt that pugnacious behaviour does exhibit instinctive motivation; but we conclude on the contrary that this impetus is derived, not from a *pugnacious* instinct, but from a large number of motives, some innate, some acquired, the more personal or individual ones being ultimately derivable from the organism's primary needs.

We shall attempt, therefore, to show that these facts render the concept of the instinct of pugnacity both unnecessary and misleading as an explanation of aggressive behaviour. Moreover, during the discussion we shall indicate certain factors and concepts which in our opinion more accurately explain the incidence of aggressiveness. But let it be clear from the commencement that such suggestions are secondary to our main purpose, which is the critical examination of the validity of the concept of the instinct of pugnacity as the explanation of aggressiveness as exhibited in the behaviour of children. Undoubtedly, the task of re-stating the explanation of aggressiveness in the light of new concepts and wider evidence is one of great importance to scientific thought. But first the ground must be cleared of obsolescent matter, and the two tasks can best be accomplished separately.

II. THE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN.

We mentioned above that the newer school of ethnologists (generally known as "diffusionists") have made invaluable contributions to a genetic study of pugnacity. In W. J. Perry's "The Growth of Civilisation" the following paragraph appears. Writing of the really primitive peoples of the present day, he says:

"When inquiry is made at the beginning, when the food-gatherers of the earth are examined, a remarkable result follows. Instead of spending their days fighting, these people, one and all, live peaceful lives when left undisturbed. They use no violence in their personal relations, and they do not fight as communities. The unanimity with which men and women who have lived among such peoples, and know them well, testify to their honesty, their fidelity to the marriage tie, their kind treatment of children, their respect for the old, and

their peaceful behaviour in all their relationships, is one of the most striking phenomena of ethnology." ⁽⁶⁾

If this account be true, it becomes a question of education to see that men are reared in environments that make for peaceful and harmonious rather than aggressive relations between them; and a question of organisation to ensure that an outlet socially useful shall be found for the pugnacious energy which men today—largely as the result of our so-called "civilisation"—do possess.⁽⁷⁾ But what does the hereditarian do? He puts the telescope to his blind eye before which lie all those conditions, racial, political, historical, and economic, that breed wars, and he says: Man is, has always been, and will always be pugnacious and warlike because it is as instinctive for him to fight as it is for him to eat.

Against such an appeal to tradition and prejudice one cannot argue; but science sifts its evidence and leaves it far behind. The genuine study of the behaviour of young children represents the appeal to science, as opposed to that to tradition. It has much to say regarding the instinctiveness of pugnacious behaviour: consider well its verdict.

Now, while it seems certain that the primitive family group is predominantly peaceful in its behaviour, it might be argued that what is really happening is a repression of the pugnacious and violent tendencies of the individual. If the children were not taught by precept and example to behave themselves, would they not be quarrelsome and violent?

It is dangerous to dogmatise about such a matter as this. But reason can be adduced for the contention that the aggressiveness which can be observed in the behaviour of children is not the direct product of instinct, but the result of the conditioning of an undifferentiated avoidance reaction by the conditions of its exercise. However, such a contention as ours cannot expect to be accepted without confirmation; nor should we expect that it would, else we commit the same fallacy we attribute to the hereditarians.

Unfortunately, information concerning the social control exercised upon young children in primitive communities is

too meagre to provide data for the question under discussion. But more attention has been paid to this problem by students of the psychology of young children in civilised communities. The information they have collected is not complete, but it is sufficient to give a reasonably conclusive answer to the following two questions:

(a) Is there, in human beings, an instinct of pugnacity as a need or craving of the organism?

(b) Is there, in human beings, an instinct of pugnacity as a defensive reaction to the thwarting of vital activity?

It seems to us advisable to consider the answers to these two questions separately. In so doing it is unavoidable that some overlapping will occur; but this we shall reduce to the minimum. Let us now consider the first and most common definition of the instinct of pugnacity.

It is noteworthy that the first serious attack upon the concept of the instinct of pugnacity, in its traditional form, came from one who proposed not to abolish the concept, but to alter its meaning. Before McDougall published his "Introduction to Social Psychology" in 1908, the general psychological opinion in regard to human pugnacity was that it is due to the operation of an instinct which has survived from the time when man fought a sterner struggle for existence than he does today. Such was the view developed so emphatically and with such a wealth of imaginative illustration by Groos in his "The Play of Man". McDougall, however, recognised that this conception was to some extent erroneous, for pugnacity did not have the same type of stimulus as other instincts. It had no specific object or objects the perception of which was sufficient to initiate the initial stage of the instinctive process. "The condition of its excitement is rather any opposition to the free exercise of any impulse, any obstruction to the activity to which the creature is impelled by any one of the other instincts."⁽⁸⁾

But McDougall himself did not seem altogether convinced of the essentially defensive character of anger and pugnacity, and his examples bear witness to this inconsistency.⁽⁹⁾ More-

over, the separation of pugnacity from his general scheme of instincts is an exception that proves too much. If pugnacity is peculiar in having no specific object which excites it, then, if man must fight, there are many objects other than his fellow men against which he may direct his energies: the conquest of nature, of disease and pestilence, of war itself. This McDougall admits; but he fails to realise that by taking the personal element out of such activities he likewise removes all trace of pugnacity. For such activities as the conquest of nature may properly be termed assertive, but never pugnacious.

The above criticism will sound to some like a verbal quibble; but such a condemnation does not do it justice. The aim of our discussion is to rid scientific thought of the inaccuracies due to the inexactitude of the concept of the instinct of pugnacity. For such a task the above criticism has positive value.

Another attempt to analyse the "fighting instinct", especially as manifested in the behaviour of children, appeared in 1923. This was Pierre Bovet's "The Fighting Instinct". Bovet's treatment is an improvement on McDougall's, not only because later and thus more up to date, but also because longer and more exhaustive. But it too fails as an analysis of the nature of pugnacious activity, partly from lack of sufficient data upon which to base its generalisations, partly from the doubtful validity (from the standpoint of science) of the data that are provided, but even more because of its attempt to treat as aspects of one instinct forms of behaviour which are *qualitatively* distinct.

Examining his general argument we find that he is imbued, like many others, with a desire to discover the biological significance of fighting behaviour; and he concludes that the "fighting instinct", which he finds so lively in the child, is one "with the fundamental instinct which ensures the perpetuation of the species".⁽¹⁰⁾ Taking an analogy from the animal world (always a risky procedure), he writes:

"The fighting play of the young animal has to fit him for provoking his competitor in a contest that will enable him to choose his female—*when the time comes*. Nature has also wanted to teach the child to be ever ready for the fight, to have mind and body at all times prompt enough to defend himself, if he is attacked, and to attack on his own account without fear or mercy, whenever opportunity serves him for his own advancement." (u)

Bovet's treatment is not very successful. Arguing as he does from an anthropomorphic interpretation of the fighting behaviour of young animals, the attempt to interpret similar behaviour in children on a like basis is obviously futile.

The only empirical data employed by Bovet in his entire treatment of this question consist of about five hundred schoolboy compositions on the subject, "When children fight, why do they fight? Tell the story of a fight you have seen." From an analysis of these essays as a starting point, he begins his study of the "fighting instinct". He asserts that while it is true that children sometimes fight in order to assume possession of some object or to do injury to some person, it remains true that the great majority of children pick a quarrel for the pleasure it brings them; in other words, fighting is play for them, a type of play that satisfies their fighting instinct. These contests grade into others of a more serious nature, which, although very often entered into for the enjoyment the activity itself brings, end in serious struggles in which real injury is done. He points out further that teasing and cruelty are activities of children which are obviously related to the fighting instinct. Children, he says, do not fight because they are teased; they tease in order that they may fight. Sometimes, however, teasing, instead of leading up to a contest, is substituted for it. This and other transformations of primitive pugnacious behaviour—such as canalisation, complication, deflection, objectification, subjectification, platonisation, sublimation, etc.—tend to take place when an improvement in manners causes the child to look unfavourably on actual physical fighting.

This, in brief, is Bovet's argument. We have already indicated the defects in *one* source of his data, viz., analogy;

the other source has defects equally destructive of scientific usefulness. In other words, not only is the general assumption underlying his argument merely a speculative postulate, and therefore an unsound basis upon which to build a theory of aggressiveness, but the method of inquiry which Bovet has used to give an appearance of objectivity to his data is practically useless where he has applied it, viz., to children. Introspective reports, especially concerning intimately personal things like motives, are not very reliable at the best of times; but such reports by untrained observers (no matter how frank and sincere they may be) can hardly be considered reliable evidence. When it is realised how little even adults know of their real motives, is it not a little presumptuous, or at least rather naive, to expect children to know theirs? Moreover, his examples deal entirely with schoolboys, a class of individuals living in an artificial environment—an environment particularly conducive to fighting because of the importance it places on heroism and dominance. The tradition of the school is a decisive factor in the conduct of those who come within its sphere of influence. Consequently, the data for the study of the true nature of pugnacious behaviour are scarcely to be found in such a conventionalised atmosphere.

Thus, summarising our discussion of "The Fighting Instinct", we may say that this work, although excellent from the descriptive point of view, fails to discover a satisfactory explanation of pugnacity, largely because its point of view is too *a priori* and its evidence too meagre.

To digress for a moment, we would mention that introspection is not without its uses as a means of obtaining psychological data, if employed with discretion by trained observers. For instance, H. G. Wells, in his autobiography, gives the following retrospective account:

"My childish relations with my brothers varied between vindictive resentment and clamorous aggression. I made a terrific fuss if my games or toys were touched and I displayed great vigour in acquiring their more attractive possessions. I bit and scratched my brothers

and I kicked their shins, because I was a sturdy little boy who had to defend himself; but they had to go very easily with me because I was a delicate little fellow who might easily be injured and was certain to yell. On one occasion, I quite forget now what the occasion was, I threw a fork across the dinner table at Frank, and I can still remember very vividly the missile sticking in his forehead, where it left three little scars for a year or so and did no other harm; and I have an equally clear memory of a smashed window behind the head of my brother Freddy, the inrush of cold air and dismay, after I had flung a wooden horse at him. Finally they hit upon an effectual method of at once silencing me and punishing me. They would capture me in our attic and suffocate me with pillows. I couldn't cry out and I had to give in. I can still feel the stress of that suffocation. Why they did not suffocate me for good and all I do not know. They had no way of checking what was going on under the pillow until they took it off and looked."²²

Wells shows very clearly the important part played by personal property (because of the power it gives) and the family situation (i.e., the relation of children to one another and to the parents) in his own childhood aggressiveness. As the same two factors are found to be just as important with the majority of children, this retrospective account is not without its usefulness.

The above criticism of Bovet's data should suggest that the proper place to study the innate factors in aggressive behaviour is not in children of nine to twelve years, but in infants. With advancing years the behaviour of the human child becomes extremely complex, so much so that analysis of it is largely speculative. But, in the very early stages of the child's life, behaviour is simpler, and the effects of social conditioning (i.e., the conditioning of impulse by the social forces affecting its exercise) are more easily observed.

It has been possible, however, to gain considerable insight into the motives of the behaviour of slightly older children (up to six or seven years, for instance) by the use of psycho-analytic technique. As we shall demonstrate later, this method is particularly useful in discovering the situational factors which influence the child's social development.

Before indicating the results achieved by recent investigators in this field, it might be advisable to state once again

the issue involved. We are not particularly concerned with the question of whether aggressive behaviour is an innate or acquired form of activity. That question is merely an abstraction, for all activity must have some instinctive motivation, and all activity is likewise influenced by the conditions of its exercise. The real issue is rather to disentangle, on the score of specificity, innate from acquired motives to aggressive behaviour, and innate from acquired aggressive responses. If the contention that innate factors are on the whole more important in aggressive behaviour (especially of the type termed pugnacious) than all other influences can be maintained after all the available evidence is considered, then there is reason to accept the concept of the instinct of pugnacity as the most scientific explanation. But, if it can be shown that aggressive impulses and habits are what they are in any specific situation, and in general situations as well, not because of innate factors, but because of the formative and driving influences of their conditions of development, then we are justified in concluding that the instinct of pugnacity is not a sufficient explanation of aggressive and pugnacious behaviour.

Thus, we may ask the question: Is aggressiveness its own motive, or are the motives to aggressiveness rather resultant from the interactions of a developing personality with a relatively hostile or unaccommodating environment? And a further question: Are the aggressive responses of the child primarily determined by innate behaviour patterns, or are they not rather learned variations and developments of a primary resistance response?

The most scientific way to answer the above questions is to study the development of the infant personality in relation to specific environments. This has been attempted by several students of child psychology—Isaacs, Stratton, Watson, Bridges, Hazlitt, Sherman, M. C. Jones, Goodenough, Lois and Gardner Murphy, etc.—and their corporate results indicate that less support for the theory of the instinct of

pugnacity is to be found here than in any other sphere of inquiry. For the greatest weakness of this hypothesis is that it is unable to explain why a form of behaviour, which in early infancy is undoubtedly defensive and compensatory, should not be explained on the same basis (even though it may appear different on the surface) in older children. That is, it can find no plausible support for its thesis until the formative period of childhood is well advanced, for fighting-play (which both Groos and Bovet regard as the first indication of the instinct of pugnacity at work) rarely appears amongst children before the age of three.⁽¹³⁾ In opposition to this, it is now firmly established that long before the child reaches three years of age its emotional attitudes are already well formed. Moreover, this so-called appearance of the instinct of pugnacity in the child about the age of three can be explained on other grounds. Recent investigations have shown, for instance, that resistance-responses (sometimes taking the form of mild pugnacity) increase during the third year, *just at the age when give-and-take contracts are increasing*. In other words, the increased aggressiveness of the child at about three years is not the result of the maturation of the pugnacious instinct (a purely speculative hypothesis), but of the greater participation of the child in social intercourse with other children—a new type of situation which requires new methods of adaptation on the part of the child (an empirically established explanation).⁽¹⁴⁾

Before discussing specifically the evidence mentioned above, it might be well to mention a language difficulty. Students of child psychology, when referring to aggressiveness, may designate such behaviour angry or aggressive, or may use either of these terms indiscriminately. This may seem chaotic, but there is a reason for it. Although one may distinguish the psychic state anger from the physical expression, this distinction is, in terms of situations, arbitrary. In children, at least, aggressive behaviour is angry behaviour and angry behaviour is aggressive behaviour, though there are vast differences in the relative importance of the internal

and external aspects of this response in specific situations. It will thus be understood that when we speak of the motives to angry behaviour we mean to include all aggressive behaviour whether strictly pugnacious or not.

Coming directly to the point, the first question that presents itself concerns the general type of situation (if such can be found) which produces angry outbursts. All the child psychologists mentioned above seem to be agreed that such outbursts are always the result of the disharmonious interaction of the child with its social environment. The cause of this disharmony may be expressed in one word: *frustration*. For instance, Bridges describes the stimulus conditions calling forth anger in young children, as follows:

"Anger is prompted by a situation which instead of being a sudden call to action is a more or less sudden stoppage or interference with actions. The character of suddenness is not such an essential part of the picture in anger as in fear, though in both cases there is a call for quick readjustment. *Interference with activity, especially activity motivated by instinctive or universally common drives, is the essential criterion of an anger-producing situation.*" ⁽¹⁵⁾
[Italics ours.]

This description is borne out by Goodenough's⁽¹⁶⁾ tabulation of outbursts of anger in connection with activities involving dressing and undressing, and other early social adjustments which the average child is called upon to make.

Goodenough's studies of anger in relation to concrete situations are probably the best of their kind yet published. With the co-operation of the mothers of forty-five children, she obtained daily records of the immediate circumstances preceding the outbursts of angry behaviour, and also a notation concerning the physical condition of the child, changes in routine and events in the child's general pre-disposition to anger. She found that "the frequency of anger in the same child from day to day was determined by intrinsic factors resulting in differential responses to constant stimuli, and extrinsic factors affecting the frequency and intensity of the irritating conditions to which the child is subjected".⁽¹⁷⁾

Among the *intrinsic* factors which would produce an internal condition predisposing towards anger were fatigue, toxic condition resulting from constipation, other physical conditions of which overt symptoms were bed-wetting, restless sleep, etc. Goodenough remarks further:

"Any temporary condition of imperfect health, such as a slight cold, tends to increase the frequency of outbursts over that reported on days when health is said to be normal. Outbursts are also more frequent when the child is constipated than when his bowels are in a normal condition. Among children in the process of training for nocturnal bladder control, outbursts are almost twice as frequent on days following nights when the bed was wet as on days following dry nights." (10)

Since children have been known to withhold fæces and wet themselves owing to emotional causes, it is not surprising to find enuresis or constipation associated with outbursts of temper as an expression of an underlying physiological or psychological disturbance.

Among the outstanding *extrinsic* factors were the numbers of visitors in the home, either adults or children, special trips away from home to go shopping, to church or Sunday school, to go for a trip in an automobile, to go to the movies, to the doctor or dentist, to go visiting or calling, the presence of irregular meal hours, a new food or a new toy, a new playmate, etc.

More valuable still is the classification of various types of conflict in which both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a part. The two most important types were "objections to routine physical situations" and "direct conflicts with authority". Under the former category are included such activities as going to the toilet, going to bed, washing face, etc. Age differences and sex differences were noted here: the maximum difficulty with feeding was at three years, and boys objected more to the grooming than did girls. The age differences would appear to be of normal occurrence, and to be due partly to maturation and partly to individual experi-

ence; the sex differences, as Goodenough herself suggests, are probably due to a difference in the handling of these problems with boys and girls, and a tendency to consider such objections on the part of boys manly. Other groups of situations which produced anger and resistance come under the category of direct conflicts with authority. Such situations were: refusal of permission to the child to carry out a customarily forbidden activity, refusal to permit a desired activity not ordinarily tabooed, resentment at punishment, and an occasional example of resentment at the adult's refusal to protect the child from the consequences of his own behaviour. Again, situations such as a desire for attention, inability to make desires understood, and a thwarted desire to share in the activities of others, were found responsible for angry outbursts in several cases, although they are not as important as the groups mentioned above.

A full analysis of Goodenough's data is obviously beyond the scope of this article. But a few significant points may be mentioned. In the first place, remarks Goodenough, "these situational variations must be seen in terms of the situation value to the child".⁽¹⁹⁾ The more absorbed the child is in an activity with which he is personally identified, as in play, the more he is likely to be irritated and become angry by any frustration or interruption. Furthermore, the more he 'gets out' of inhibiting his anger, the more readily will this inhibition be exerted; and the more he 'gets out' of reacting aggressively, the less reason, after all, for exerting the effort necessary for inhibition. Neglect of inhibition due to the indefiniteness of the rewards for exercising it may thus turn into positive employment of the aggressive response as the most profitable course of action. The temper tantrum, for instance, may be a powerful weapon in the hands of a child experienced in its use—as many a mother has found to her cost.

Consideration of the anger-aggressive response in terms of the situation value to the child results therefore in two

main conclusions: first, that this response is elicited (in general terms) by the frustration of any activity *valued* by the child; and, secondly, that the chief criterion of the *value* of this response to the child is its success as a means of attaining ends, as a method of adaptation. There seems to be a certain hedonic relation between specific responses and their development in the child; and there can be no doubt that the success of aggressive behaviour as a weapon of adaptation in one situation predisposes to its employment in others. The facts would indicate, therefore, that the constancy of aggressive behaviour as a response even to serious obstacles depends in large part upon the child's experience in the use of this response, i.e., on its *education in aggressiveness*.

What do these conclusions indicate regarding the validity of applying the concept of the instinct of pugnacity (in the first sense) to the aggressive behaviour of children? They show first of all that the problem is infinitely more complex than this theory would lead us to believe. If pugnacity were a need of the organism, the only stimulus necessary for its arousal, once the capacity for aggressiveness was developed (and it is present soon after birth), would be an environmental opportunity, i.e., any stimulus adequate to arouse the ever-ready instinct. But Goodenough and others have demonstrated that the condition of adequacy is not a sufficient explanation; for every instance of aggressive behaviour in the children studied had a specific situation value to that child—the same external situation does not always produce the same response, nor does the same mental or physical condition of the child (and the variations are found not only as between different children, but with the same child at different times); the type of response always depends on the interaction of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Now, although the instinct of pugnacity (like any other instinct) can fairly be regarded as capable of variations (i.e., more than one stimulus may arouse it, and it may be inhibited from responding to its normal stimulus), it could not under any circumstances be capable

of the variations found in actual concrete cases—and still have any instinctive characteristic.¹

Moreover, Goodenough's discoveries concerning the relative importance of various "conflict situations" at different ages give another serious blow to the dogma of instinctive pugnacity. Appearances of different types of conflict at different ages, formerly explained as due to the maturation of instinct, are now shown to be the outcome of new social relations. For example, conflicts of authority and difficulties in the establishment of routine physical habits are generally responsible, says Goodenough, for a much greater percentage of angry outbursts between the ages of one and three than between three and four; but between the ages of three and four, disagreements in competition among children themselves take precedence, and conflicts with authority gradually peter out. These age-differences can be accounted for, as she observes, on the grounds that up to about three years of age the average child's attention is directed chiefly to the adaptation of its personality to the social demands emanating from its parents, whereas from about three years upwards it comes more into contact with children of its own age, i.e., it begins to play with equals instead of with superiors or merely inanimate objects, and its adaptations have to be made in terms of this different social environment. Such an explanation fulfils the requirements of scientific method for it can be experimentally verified; it should therefore take precedence over any explanation of the *a priori* type, like the concept of the instinct of pugnacity, which can verify its data only by deductions from a provisionally accepted general theory.

So far we have tended to neglect the intrinsic factors in the various conflict situations, the chief reason being that

¹ This criticism applies to McDougall's view of the instinct of pugnacity as well as to those of others. Although he gives this instinct a much wider stimulus range than do most writers, this does not greatly reduce the difficulty. To say that man possesses an instinct to react pugnaciously to *every* frustration (no matter the source) is absurd, because contradictory to fact. If, on the other hand, he means "pugnacity" to be "watered down" to the level of mere resistance, then he is guilty of loose terminology.

Goodenough herself, whose work we have in the main been considering, is forced by the very nature of her method to give more attention to the extrinsic factors. Those intrinsic factors which she does note are mainly physiological; and undoubtedly they are important conditions influencing differential responses to constant stimuli. But these are not the most important intrinsic conditions, which are *psychological*. In a sense, the individual's psychological condition is the most important aspect of any conflict-situation, for it explains why the individual responds as he does to this thwarting or that, and why his responses are not constant. It is likewise more difficult to discover the psychological factors in any specific instance. A certain amount can be inferred, as we have shown, from the behaviour manifested in various well-defined situations. This process, however, is not without its drawbacks, for there is always the danger of finding the motives one expects or wishes to find. It is in the overcoming of this difficulty that the psycho-analytic method has proved so fruitful (although it cannot be denied that those who employ it frequently fall into the same error, if in subtler fashion). This method seeks to discover the motives to any particular course of conduct by eliminating the personal factor, i.e., the resistance of the subject to any inquiry into his real motives; and in this task it has been attended with a fair amount of success, particularly when dealing with children. In recent years, a number of adherents of Freudian psychology have been closely associated with nursery schools, and they have been able to verify by observation and experiment the suggestions thrown out by Freud himself.¹

Freud has always considered the aggressive tendencies of great importance in any theory of human social life. In his earlier works he speaks of social life as being the result of a

¹ The most important study of the behaviour of children, from the psycho-analytic point of view, is Dr. Susan Isaacs' "Social Development in Young Children" (1933). This book contains so much information on the subject of aggressiveness that no very specific references can be given. Pages 218 to 265, however, contain the most important contributions.

struggle between love and hate, or, rather, the erotic and aggressive tendencies. But, in his later works, he lays great stress upon the element of aggression which he regards as primary or underived and capable, in the absence of inhibiting factors, of unprovoked cruelty. Social life depends therefore on the control and curtailment of this impulse. This is accomplished normally by several mental mechanisms—which we need not mention here—the degree of control habitually exercised depending largely upon the child's early experiences. In infancy such tendencies are generally driven deeper and deeper into the unconscious, and express themselves mainly in neurotic symptoms resulting from unconscious mental conflicts. It is for this reason that the real motives to aggression are so difficult to discover. These motives may be numerous and various, but at bottom it will always be found that this primary aggression is seeking for an outlet. This, briefly, is Freud's view. Dr. Edward Glover, an orthodox Freudian, exemplifies this idea in a recent book. Discussing the aggressive behaviour of children, from the psycho-analytic point of view, he writes:

"The child is driven into a corner by an implacable enemy, namely, the intolerable tension of its own primitive urges. These not only cannot be gratified, but feed on frustration; frustration induces anxiety; anxiety is the enemy of peace of mind; hence when breaking-point is reached, the child behaves like a timid animal and bites." (20)

On the surface, Freud's treatment of aggressiveness would seem to differ little from the orthodox views of the academic psychologists. In so far as this comparison is correct, his treatment is subject to all the criticisms which can be brought against the concept of the instinct of pugnacity. And the most important of such criticisms (and one that is certainly justified) is that Freud's original and underived impulse of aggression is not an empirically established hypothesis, but a postulate. Moreover, Freud never attempted to prove experimentally most of his postulates; he merely stated them, suggested possible lines of explanation, and left the burden

of proof to his followers. Many of his suggestions have borne fruit, and form a valuable contribution to the revised explanation of aggressiveness which we have been endeavouring roughly to formulate. But let it be clear that none of his work or that of his followers provides substantial evidence for his thesis that man possesses an instinctive need to be aggressive.

Of all Freud's suggestions relating to the explanation of aggressive behaviour, none has been so influential as the importance he attaches to the earliest impressions of life. At times, indeed, he gives the impression in his writings that he considers that the key to the whole problem of human hostility is to be found in the relations of the Infantile Family Group. But, at others, he seems unable to rid his thought of the idea of *primary aggressive tendencies*. The same uncertainty pervades the thought of his followers: some (like Glover) placing greatest emphasis upon the instinctive aspect; others (like Isaacs), upon the influence of early social environment. It is indeed significant that Dr. Isaacs, although nominally she accepts the theory of underived aggressive impulses, actually demonstrates by her examples and theoretical explanations that childhood aggressiveness can adequately be explained without resorting to this postulate at all.

In brief, Isaacs' main findings in regard to the aggressive behaviour of children are as follows. First and foremost, without denying the possibility of innate aggressive tendencies, she asserts that such behaviour cannot be explained adequately as the result of any primary instinct of pugnacity; it is much more complex. In the children she observed in her nursery school, she noted the following surface motives at work in their hostile behaviour: (*a*) possession, (*b*) power, (*c*) rivalry, and (*d*) general moodiness (with feelings of inferiority or superiority). Now, the first three motives are commonly enough recognised as factors in individual aggressiveness; they are often called "instincts", under such names as acquisition, domination and self-assertion. Dr. Isaacs

disagrees with this designation, however, for such motives are not atomic psychological units, but *social responses intimately connected with one another*. Taking the motive of possession as an example, she writes:

"Even in the least complicated situation, where the value of the thing owned is intrinsic, as the means of satisfying some (primary or derived) personal need, the actual wish to *own* it can only be understood in terms of power—or, rather, of *powerlessness*. I want to own it because if I do not it may not be there when I need it, and my need will go unsatisfied. If I am at the mercy of another's will for the satisfaction of my need, I am helpless before it. Only by having the means of satisfaction of my need as *mine*, mine to have and to hold, can I feel safe." (21)

Dr. Isaacs, however, does not rest satisfied with exploding the myth that atomic psychological units can be motives to behaviour. She realises that even the complex motives she has analysed (such as *possession*) are at bottom only surface motives to aggressiveness. Behind them and embracing them all is to be found what is probably the greatest motive guiding the child to positive behaviour: it is, she says, a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness to secure its needs—elsewhere well-designated the *need for security*⁽²²⁾—that drives the child to aggressive behaviour. "When a child is anxious", writes Glover, "it is liable to break into tantrums. A frightened child is an anxious child. A naughty child is a terrified and guilty child. An aggressive and destructive child is panic-stricken with guilt and anxiety." (23) Here we have an illuminating side-light on the problem of hostility. Not only is aggression an indication of a capacity and need to seek security of body and mind; it can be used as a protection against inner anxiety.

It seems distinctly probable therefore that the aggressive behaviour of children is not the result of repressed and frustrated aggressive impulses seeking expression, but rather primarily an attempt to restore equilibrium in a disturbed mind, an attempted adaptation to a hostile social environment which deprives the child of its most essential need, *security*; such responses are what Dr. Ian Suttie has so

aptly termed "social anxiety reactions with a fundamental adaptive intention".⁽²⁴⁾

In her observations on the aggressive behaviour of children in the nursery school, Dr. Isaacs noticed particularly that "an attitude of hostility to all the other children seems to be the primary response of any young child on entering a group".⁽²⁵⁾ Why should this be so, except it be instinctive for children to be hostile to one another unless inhibited? It has sometimes been urged, she writes, that the hostile behaviour of young children to each other might be regarded as a form of *experimental play*, i.e., an attempt to find out what other animals are like, with perhaps an insurance against risks by assuming that they are dangerous until proved otherwise. This, she says, is true as far as it goes; but it does not go nearly far enough. Deeper and more permanent motives need to be sought, linking up this behaviour with what comes before it in the child's life and what follows it.

"*The key is surely to be found in the family situation* [italics ours]. The immediate hostility of a young child to others is only to be understood in terms of the motive of *rivalry* for the love of adults, and, primarily, of course, of the parents. It is the young child's utter dependence upon the love and care of adults, his absolute need to possess them and their love, that makes the mere presence of another child seem to him a threat to his life and love."⁽²⁶⁾

Taking cognisance of the results achieved by the psychoanalysts, together with those of Goodenough and others working from the objective aspect, we find that to interpret the aggressive behaviour of children in terms of an instinct of pugnacity is to misinterpret much of the material at present to hand. The motive to aggression is found to be (speaking generally) not aggression itself, but self-protection. It does not follow from this, however, that aggressive behaviour in children is abnormal, or even unnecessary, nor that it can be eliminated by proper care and love for the child. To embrace such an opinion is to neglect the social significance of aggressiveness. Undoubtedly much unnecessary irritation and active hostility could be eliminated by some such means;

but the fact remains that, so far as we know at present, every normal child (mainly for reasons indicated above) passes through a stage when hostility becomes the usual reaction to the presence of other persons, especially children. "It can indeed be said", remarks Dr. Isaacs, "taking all our evidence together, that, in the earliest years, all children (with an intensity varying according to inner conditions and outer circumstances) feel other children to be actual or potential rivals." (27) Even this state of affairs, however, represents an advance in the child's social adaptation; for, despite the disorderly air it wears, it is yet the most promising first response from a young child who has not already had plenty of social intercourse with his fellows. It indicates an *attitude* towards other children, and thus "presages an active and vigorous social life in the not distant future—under careful handling. (It is another matter, of course, when this attitude persists indefinitely, or remains the main response to the overtures of other children.)" (28)

This explanation of the motives behind the child's aggressive actions clarifies many things customarily explained in terms of the instinct of pugnacity. One example will suffice to make this fact apparent. Play-fights and games of a like nature were explained by the older psychologists (like Groos and Bovet) as being manifestations of the instinct of pugnacity, or at least preparations for its future needs. But we find upon investigation of such games and contests that no such conjecture is necessary. A certain amount of *experimental play* enters into both make-believe and real aggression, and the two are often difficult to distinguish. But in aggression of the playful variety, whether purely make-believe or bordering on the real situation, the motive of power seems at all times to be of consequence. As Dr. Isaacs remarks, even the seemingly purely make-believe aggressions are not mere hedonistic responses. She writes:

"A great deal of make-believe aggression, however, was true play, and independent of any real situation. These games of 'shooting' and 'playing battleships' are forerunners of the older boys' 'Red Indians'

and 'English and Germans', as well as of the more conventional competitive games. *In them the phantasy of power finds an admirable outlet.*"⁽²⁹⁾ [Italics ours.]

Let us now briefly consider the alternative definition of the instinct of pugnacity, viz., that of an instinct to break down "any opposition to the free exercise of any impulse" and "to destroy whatever offers this opposition".⁽³⁰⁾ In the first place, it will be obvious that the acceptance of this definition does not carry with it dangers to scientific thinking comparable with those implicit in the alternative definition, which takes pugnacity to be a need of the organism. Nevertheless, if such an explanation is not strictly in accordance with all the scientific data available, an advance in the science of Psychology is thereby retarded. Consequently, we examine this definition; and upon investigation we find two sources of error: first, not strictly accurate use of terms, resulting in a double confusion of anger with pugnacity and pugnacity with the bodily expressions of anger; secondly, the incompleteness of the data upon which this definition is based, resulting in a misleading simplification of the problem at issue and its solution.

The first source of error is easily exposed. An instinct of pugnacity and an instinct to break down "any opposition to the free exercise of any impulse" are not one and the same thing. Both may imply resistance to frustration, but there is a vast difference in implication between an instinct to resist opposition, and an instinct to resist it by immediate physical combat. The confusion is, as we have said, double: not only are *anger* and *pugnacity* used indiscriminately as synonymous, when there are actually vast differences in meaning between them, but pugnacity is wrongfully assumed to be the natural and inevitable accompaniment (unless prevented by strong inhibition) of the psychic state of anger.

The second error is not so obvious and requires closer investigation to detect. It is chiefly responsible for the common assumption that pugnacity is the natural outward expression of anger, and the error is one of too superficial investigation.

The exposure of this error was the result of a series of researches, from about 1917 onward (and not concluded yet), into the question of the *primary emotional patterns*. The earliest systematic approach to this problem was initiated by J. B. Watson at Johns Hopkins in 1917. As a result of his experiments he suggested three emotions as primary: fear, rage, and love. Moreover, he described these in specific stimulus-response terms: rage, for instance, was the stiffening reaction to hampered movements, and was expressed by slashing of hands and feet, holding the breath, crying, or screaming.⁽³¹⁾ This interpretation of the primary rage response at once gained a wide acceptance. From the physiological point of view it was supported by Bekhterev and Cannon. Cannon, for instance, has accepted its primary and primitive character, and considers that in many respects it is similar to a simple reflex, i.e., it is universal, unlearned, appears very early in life, appears promptly to an appropriate stimulus, requires a specific stimulating situation, and possesses biological utility.⁽³²⁾ This contrasts favourably with the indefiniteness of McDougall's instinct of pugnacity; but, on the other hand, it should be noted that Cannon, in his attention to the expression of rage in the lower animals, seems to have underestimated one important point (a point stressed by McDougall, thereby compensating somewhat for the indefiniteness of his treatment): *with regard to both afferent and efferent changes, the rage pattern in human beings would appear to be much more modifiable than the so-called simple reflexes.*

From the psychological standpoint, the present tendency among specialists in this field is to criticise the "specific-pattern" theory of emotional responses. The earliest emotions (and their physical correlates) are described as generalised rather than specific reactions; they are diffuse, undifferentiated responses, and are influenced by numerous situational factors and by the readiness of the organism to react. Naturally, the different types of conditioning factors are variously

emphasised and evaluated by different investigators. Mary Cover Jones, for instance, stresses the "preparedness" of the organism as a primary factor in determining emotional behaviour.⁽³³⁾ Sherman, testing the assumption of both Watson and Cannon of specific reflex components in emotion, concludes that the reactions to isolated stimuli are not specialised and easily definable patterns appearing with uniformity in many individual children, but that they are unco-ordinated, unspecialised, and diversified. He writes:

"If we believe that the emotions are native characteristics with a predetermined pattern, we are very likely to attribute to the child emotional reactions which in reality may be merely attempts to adjust with the body as a whole to some stimulating condition. The infant even as old as six months does not show typical forms of behaviour which can be characterised as definite emotions, but only generally aimless responses which can at most be called vaguely adaptive."⁽³⁴⁾

The implications of Sherman's work have been fairly well corroborated by Goodenough and Bridges. The latter has developed a genetic theory of emotion, and she concludes that, from "an original undifferentiated emotion of excitement", which is aroused by any strong stimulus and which manifests itself in widespread unco-ordinated activity, are differentiated, partly owing to maturation but largely through individual learning, the primary emotions—and later those more complex.⁽³⁵⁾

The evidence supplied by these specialists would seem to indicate therefore that the rage and anger reactions of the young child do not possess the specificity of response and co-ordination of bodily activity necessary to warrant the description of them in terms of an instinct of pugnacity. Specialisation of response does not take place until the infantile emotional responses have been considerably modified, and present evidence all points to the fact that these modifications are due primarily to socialised learning. On the modifications of original behaviour, which may be noted from a very early age, Goodenough writes:

"With advancing age behaviour during anger becomes more overtly directed towards a given end. At the same time, the primi-

tive bodily responses of the infant and young child gradually become replaced by substitute reactions of a somewhat less violent and more symbolic character. As age advances, the proportion of outbursts in which the behaviour consists only or chiefly of simple displays of undirected energy decreases, while the frequency of retaliative behaviour increases.¹ There are more evidences of persisting generalised reactions toward a single person and more attempts to retaliate by means of indirect attacks designed to hurt the feelings rather than to injure the body of the offender. The percentage of observable after-reactions, particularly resentfulness and sulkiness, increases steadily with advancing age."⁽³⁶⁾

It is noteworthy that the order in which these modifications are actually observed to occur is precisely the reverse of the order which would be expected were they due to the maturation of instinct, i.e., the order is not from innate specialisation to socialised unspecialisation (as McDougall would have it), but from innate unspecialisation to socialised specialisation in many directions. In the change from the undifferentiated emotional state to the numerous differentiated states, the chief directive factor is the success of the resulting modifications as steps in the child's adaptation to the social environment.

SUMMARY.

We may now briefly review the ground we have covered. We began by observing that a pugnacious instinct might be conceived in two ways:

- (a) As a need or craving of the organism.
- (b) As an instinct to fight in response to the thwarting of an impulse, especially one with instinctive motivation.

With regard to the first possibility, we found that so far as the study of young children reveals, this explanation is unsound. Consideration of both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors in aggressive behaviour indicates that pugnacity need never be assumed as its own motive, for it has significance always in relation to some more primary need. This need

¹ We have already indicated that this is due to new social contacts.

is, in the young, primarily a need for security, and the aggressiveness of children is mainly intended to be adaptive to this end.

With regard to the second possibility, which defines pugnacity as instinctive from the side of response, present evidence would indicate that the angry emotional response (which is loosely termed a pugnacious response), far from being an inborn set behaviour pattern, is itself differentiated early in life from some more general undifferentiated avoidance reaction.

The general conclusion which we have drawn from the above discussion, therefore, is that the concept of the instinct of pugnacity is, defined in the first manner, definitely contrary to fact, and, defined in the second manner, made obsolete by a more exact analysis of the data to hand.

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THE ÆSTHETIC THEORY OF I. A. RICHARDS.

By D. H. MONRO.

I.—RICHARDS' THEORY OF VALUE.

No theory of æsthetics has roused more attention in recent years than that expounded by Dr. I. A. Richards in his "Principles of Literary Criticism". Here, it is claimed, is a practising literary critic who has been able to apply to his art some of the most recent discoveries in psychology and some of the most recent speculations in ethics; and all who pride themselves on being "progressive" have acclaimed the result as the true and unimpeachable æsthetic gospel.

As a consequence, Richards has been regarded, both by his admirers and by his opponents, as just another warrior in the ranks of Behaviourism; and few attempts have been made to place his theory in its proper perspective among other theories of æsthetics. That is what I wish to do in this paper; and my main thesis will be that Richards is in reality confusing two distinct and mutually inconsistent theories of criticism.

Broadly, all theories of literary criticism fall into two main classes: moral theories, and æsthetic experience theories.¹ We may agree that it is the function of literature to say something, to communicate something to the reader, or, if that is going too far, at least to rouse in him some sort of "response", or "attitude". This response must either be valuable for its own sake, or because it conduces to right living. If we accept the latter alternative, then we will judge literature by ethical standards. If we accept the former, we will have to maintain that literature is to be judged by

¹ There is a third class, "communicability" theories, which see literary value, not in what is communicated, but in the adequacy of communication. Tolstoy and Richards agree that *some* of the value of literature must depend on this factor, but give it a subordinate place.

unique standards of its own. The usual way of putting this is to say that literature, or art generally, causes a unique æsthetic experience, which is to be valued for its own sake, and not for any reference which it may have beyond itself.

In its main outlines, Richards' theory is undoubtedly a moral theory. Essentially, it may be regarded as a modification of Tolstoy's views, as set forth in "What is Art?" Literature is of value in so far as it reinforces the true ethical doctrine in the mind of the reader. For Tolstoy the true ethical doctrine is simply the brotherhood of man. But Richards regards this as too narrow a standard of value. And, as a broader and more comprehensive standard, he adopts the ethical theory that has been grafted on to the psychological speculations of Professor McDougall.

Briefly the theory amounts to this: there are certain basic impulses or propensities. The problem of conduct is how to satisfy all these without thwarting any, or, if that is impossible, to thwart the least possible number. Hence the need for "integration" or "systematisation". Our mode of satisfying the impulses must be organised so that in satisfying any one we will not thwart any other.

Now the bearing of McDougall's psychology on ethics has been much misunderstood. Richards, in common with some others, imagines that it does away with ethics altogether. "Critical remarks", he says, "are merely a branch of psychological remarks and no special ethical or metaphysical ideas need be introduced to explain value."¹ And that he means value generally and not merely literary value is evident from the whole trend of his theory. Now it is obvious, of course, that psychology in itself can only tell us that these appetencies do exist and can be satisfied in certain ways. Whether they should be satisfied or whether some should be satisfied at the expense of others, and if so which, are questions that do call for "special ethical ideas".²

¹ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 23.

² Cf. article by Eliseo Vivas in *Philosophical Review* for July, 1935.

Moreover it is worth noticing that McDougall himself is not primarily concerned with ethics; he professes no more than to give an empirical account of the actual structure of character. In his account the wide range of individual peculiarities is explained as being different modes of organisation of the same basic elements. And McDougall does, as a matter of fact, pass judgment on the relative value of these "systematisations". But in doing so, he does not actually identify "the good" with some particular mode of organisation. He does say that one particular mode of organisation should be aimed at; but his position seems to be that this mode (integration) is merely good as a means; that the most *efficient* type of personality is the most integrated, and that what ends the possessor of such personality should aim at is a further question which is left to ethical theory.

"Character of the finest type", he says, "is that which is complex, strongly and harmoniously organised and directed towards the realisation of higher goals and ideals." The point seems to be that these "higher goals and ideals" will not as a matter of fact be attained unless the character is organised in this particular way. The "sentiments", etc., must work together; the ends to which one is directed must not conflict with the ends of the others; otherwise the totality which they comprise cannot efficiently attain any end. But such an organisation would be a "capacity of opposites"; it would be efficient for evil as well as good. The organisation of instincts, then, is not on McDougall's view the end, but merely one step towards the attainment of the end.

It is true that this over-simplifies the position. It is not possible to organise a set of quite neutral sentiments first and then proceed to direct them towards the right ends. In the very formation of sentiment moral judgment is usually implied. This is most obviously true of the sentiments of love and hatred. But can sentiments built up round the wrong things work together harmoniously? That is the question. And there seems little doubt that they can. It may be said, of course, that if you love the wrong things and

hate the wrong things you will not live so "full", so "rich", so "satisfying" a life. But that is not the point. Can your thirteen basic instincts still find outlets that will not conflict? On McDougall's basis that is all that our question can amount to.

"When a man has acquired the sentiment of love for a person or other object", says McDougall, "he is apt to experience tender emotion in its presence, fear or anxiety when it is in danger, anger when it is threatened, sorrow when it is lost, joy when the object prospers or is restored to him, and so on."¹ That is a typical instance of a sentiment providing outlets for the instincts and the corresponding emotions. There seems no reason why the system should not work as well with the wrong objects as with the right ones. All that is required is that the things we hate should be the opposite of those we love. But we can be consistently bad as well as consistently good. The opposite of an integrated character is one which is weak or vacillating, not vicious.

It is not clear that this is always McDougall's position. But whether he recognises it or not the point remains. If integration means finding outlets for the basic instincts so that they will not conflict, then integration may lead to either good or bad conduct. Integration is the distinctive feature of "efficient" character or a strong personality, but not of good character. Conduct must be organised so as to satisfy all the basic instincts. Otherwise the agent will always be subject to conflicting desires and the promptings of half-stifled impulses. But it appears that any number of systematisations would satisfy all the instincts and that these systematisations can be either bad or good (according as they are or are not "directed towards higher goals or ideals"). The problem now is to find a criterion for choosing between different systematisations each of which satisfies all the basic instincts. And McDougall seems on the whole content to regard this as the special problem of ethics and to leave it to ethical theory.

¹ *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 107.

But this does not satisfy Richards. He wishes to make the whole of ethics rest on "systematisation". "Anything is valuable which satisfies an appetency. . . . The only reason for not satisfying a desire is that more important desires will thereby be thwarted."¹ And the importance of the desire means "the extent of the disturbance of other impulses in the individual's activities which the thwarting of the impulse involves".² The moral problem, then, is simply to satisfy all the impulses or, if that is impossible, the maximum number.

If by impulse Richards means what McDougall means by instinct, then we have seen reason to believe that this position is untenable. But of course he may mean something different. His own account is far from clear. Not one impulse is ever described. Certainly there is no attempt to enumerate the impulses on McDougall's lines. Impulses, we are told, are either appetencies or aversions and, except that there may be unconscious appetencies, are the same as wants or desires. But we are given no further information.

Now it is clear that by impulse Richards must mean one of three things. He can mean the basic instinct, the sort of thing that McDougall is talking about. Or at the other end of the scale, he can mean the surface wish, the superficial desire. A desire for a pork chop, for instance, can either be regarded as simply a desire for a pork chop (which we may call the superficial desire) or as the manifestation of an impulse for food. Or, thirdly, Richards may mean something intermediate between the two. Thus a desire for a pork chop might be regarded as desire for food of a certain kind, for meat perhaps, or possibly for carbohydrates. Obviously gratification of the desire means something different in each of the three cases.

The superficial desire can only be gratified by eating a pork chop. The basic instinct will presumably be satisfied by any food at all. The intermediate desire will be satisfied

¹ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 48.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

not indeed by any food, but by any that contains the right carbohydrate.

We have seen that there are difficulties in Richards' view if by impulse he means the basic instinct. And the difficulties are no less if he means the superficial desire. For when we reduce desire to basic instincts we can easily see how we can change their form (so as to reconcile them with other desires) and at the same time retain their essence. For instance, if a man gratifies his self-assertive instinct by beating his wife, we may say that this is bad because it interferes with the adequate exercise of other instincts (those, for example, which are manifested in the "tender emotion"). Therefore we suggest that he gratify his self-assertive instinct otherwise. But, if you regard the superficial desire as good in itself, conflicts cannot be resolved in this way. Some desires obviously must be thwarted. And why, if one wish is as good as another, should the simple pleasure of wife-beating be sacrificed at the altar of domestic affection? Because, it is replied, that course satisfies the greatest number of wishes in the long run. But how can we know? Is it really possible to carry out this census-taking among the wishes? And in any case are we really entitled to say that one wish, taking wish in its most superficial sense, is no more important than another; and that we need therefore do no more than count heads? On the contrary, the whole case rests on the assertion that we can distinguish the important or essential wishes.

This is brought out very clearly in Mr. Edwin B. Holt's attempt to substitute this sort of psychology for ethics.¹ Right action, according to him, is that action which satisfies all the wishes of the person acting. This is so because wishes are always for the good, a proposition which both Freud and Socrates are invoked to support. But no attempt is made to show that the wish as Holt defines it—"a course of action which the living body executes or is prepared to execute with

¹ *The Freudian Wish and its Place in Ethics.*

regard to some object or fact of its environment"¹—is always for the good or is indeed capable of being reconciled with the other wishes. The reconciliation can only, it appears, be effected by reducing the wish to what is "real" or "essential" in it. Thus the drunkard's desire for drink can only be made an "integrated" part of his character by reducing it to the desire for excitement, for escape from worry and so on. The definition would never enable us to get beyond the brandy bottle and so would never enable this wish to be reconciled with all the other wishes which must necessarily be thwarted so long as the drunkard remains a drunkard. This is abundantly borne out by Holt's own examples. The child's desire to smoke is resolved into the desire to be grown up, and this in its turn into the desire to escape from a sense of inferiority.² The young girl's desire to go to the theatre is resolved into "the proper curiosity of youth to see life, the love of companionship and gaiety, and the need for relaxation".³ The technique of morals, then, is seen to consist in (a) reducing wishes to their essential elements and (b) finding means of satisfying all these "essential wishes".

But how are we to find out what is essential in the wish? This appears to be just the question we started from: what are these impulses of Richards' that must be reconciled and satisfied? We saw that there were three possibilities: the impulse might be the basic instinct, the surface wish, or something intermediate. We have seen that it cannot be the basic instinct because any attempt at enumerating these will show that satisfying them does not solve the whole ethical problem. We have seen that it cannot be the surface wish because these cannot be reconciled or integrated at all. It must, therefore, be something intermediate. But what are these intermediate impulses, these essential wishes? How can we find out what is essential in a wish? Only, I would suggest, by reference to what is good. It is significant in

¹ Loc. cit., p. 56.

² Ibid., p. 117.

³ Ibid., p. 119.

this connection that we find Holt referring to "the *proper* curiosity of youth to see life". The assertion is that what is good means simply what the agent wants to do. But we object that what people want to do is often bad. The answer is that what they *really* want to do is always good. But how can we find out what they really want to do? And to that it appears there is no answer. So that the formula after all has no more value than the statement that the right action is that which causes (or perhaps contains) most "good". When we are informed that leading the good life means no more than integrating one's impulses, it is open to us to retort that integrating one's impulses means nothing more definite than leading the good life.

In particular it must be insisted that the difficulty is not removed by identifying the wish, as Holt identifies it, with the "motor set" of the body. Indeed this makes it even more difficult to imagine the reconciliation of an infinite number of wishes.

II.—RICHARDS' THEORY OF CRITICISM.

What is the bearing of all this on Richards' theory of criticism? Richards, like Tolstoy, considers that literary value lies partly in the effectiveness of communication and partly in the value of what is communicated. And what is communicated has value if, and only if, it helps towards an integrated scheme of life. We have seen that Richards is mistaken in supposing that this is the final criterion of value. But nevertheless it is still, on McDougall's view, a condition of good conduct that it should spring from an "integrated" personality. And if literature does help us towards achieving "integration" it is performing a valuable service for ethics. But on what grounds can it be said to help us to achieve integration?

The function of art, according to Richards, is to build up in the beholder a "total response" or "attitude". In a poem the rhythm, the metre, the sense, the free play of imagery and association all combine to build up this response. In a

picture the effect is produced by the combination of colour, form and the more purely representational elements. And something similar is true of music, though here Richards admits difficulty in analysis. Each of these elements induces a separate response in the beholder, or, more specifically, rouses in him a separate emotion. In the good work of art these emotions reinforce each other or are reconciled so that the resultant "attitude" is coherent and "integrated".

Moreover emotions are for Richards bodily changes.¹ It is true that he qualifies this assertion and guards himself by saying that "bodily changes make up a *large part* of the *consciousness* of emotions". But in the first place he tells us nothing of the other part beyond referring to "a tendency to action of some definite kind or group of kinds". And it appears that a "tendency to action" means for him a "motor adjustment" of the muscles, and so can be regarded as another bodily change. And, secondly, if emotions are not to be described in terms of mental events (consciousness) or physical events (bodily changes), what are they?

What happens then when we read a poem is something like this. The different "elements" rouse different emotions, that is, cause different bodily changes or "motor adjustments". These are reconciled at the "incipient" or "imaginal" stage. The result is some sort of complicated motor adjustment that is somehow satisfying and morally beneficial.

But is this "integration" as it is understood by McDougall and Holt? The typical problem calling for integration of conflicting impulses was according to Holt that of a girl brought up in a puritanical household who wishes both to go to the theatre and also to avoid what is sinful. The conflict is solved in discriminating between what she "really" wants to do (see life, have companionship, gaiety and relaxation) and what she "really" wants to avoid ("unbridled frivolity" and "moral contamination"), and devising a course of action which will satisfy both requirements. This consists in accept-

¹ Loc. cit., chap. 13.

ing invitations to the theatre but insisting that the play selected shall be one of which she can conscientiously approve.

Now could any "motor set", crammed however full of "incipient" and "imaginal" emotions, really solve this problem? Does Richards seriously suggest that the motor set produced in his reader of poetry will result in a grand comprehensive course of action that will somehow incorporate and gratify all these embryonic impulses and emotions? I can imagine nothing more fantastic.

Let us consider the state of this hypothetical girl's "motor adjustments". The impulse to go to the theatre presumably consists in those muscular movements which are preparatory to dressing for the theatre, walking out of the house, sitting in a tram-car or a taxi, walking into the theatre and so on. The alternative impulse consists in the motor set which is preparatory to uttering the word "no" in reply to the invitation, sitting down in the chair before the fire, taking a book (doubtless an improving book) from the book-case, and generally staying quietly at home. In what sense are the muscular adjustments resulting in the chosen course of action (going to a carefully selected theatre) a reconciliation of these two opposing sets? If impulses are merely motor adjustments, then the whole contention that they can be "reconciled" seems to me simply nonsense.

But perhaps this is insisting too much on the identification of emotions with bodily changes. Let us therefore consider the conflict as one between the emotions as they are generally understood. I can now see some point in the assertion that the girl's final course of action reconciles her conflicting emotions (desire for entertainment and abhorrence of sin). But clearly the reconciliation is not achieved simply by causing her to experience those emotions at the same time. There is also required an intellectual apprehension of the situation. She must see just what element in the situation should call forth her abhorrence, and what element should call forth her desire. Each element in the situation must be

"seen in the right light", must evoke the "fitting" or "right" emotion.

Neither Holt nor Richards would of course put it like that. They would indeed indignantly repudiate the suggestion that any reference need be made to the right or the good or even the fitting. But we have seen that it is in practice only the "essential wishes" that can be reconciled; and that the essential wish means in the last analysis just the good wish. And similarly emotions can only be reconciled so long as they are "right" emotions, i.e., the emotion which is appropriate to the situation which calls it forth.

It is this that is, I think, really valuable in Richards' integration theory. We may agree that it is the function of literature to show us all the elements in a given situation and to present each of them in its true light. And it is perhaps possible to maintain, as Tolstoy does, that literature is not concerned to show why each element should be regarded with this or that emotion, but may rouse in us directly the emotion, whatever it may be, towards the object in question. This view is particularly appropriate to poetry, where the metre, rhythm, etc., do appear to rouse emotions directly. And Richards is no doubt right in insisting that language is often used for the sake of rousing emotions rather than for the sake of asserting propositions.

But even so it is clear that the emotion roused cannot, on an integration theory, be valuable in itself. It can be valuable only if it is first an emotion to something and secondly the right emotion for that thing. But Richards denies both these points. The first point is denied in the concluding chapters of the "Principles", where he refers continually to "objectless beliefs" and "attitudes without objective reference". It may be doubted whether either of these can exist, and it seems to me that the first patently cannot. But whether they exist or not does not matter here. The point is that on Richards' own theory they cannot have any value for criticism.

The second point is denied at least implicitly in the chapter on "Poetry and Beliefs".¹ We are told here that attitudes can be roused through beliefs. But this is an unwise way to rouse them, because the belief may be removed and then the attitude will be destroyed. Whereas the attitudes are valuable whether the beliefs are true or not. But is this last assertion tenable? Even if art is justified in inculcating an emotion directly, without giving the reason why this particular emotion is fitting in this particular context, it is clear that the value of experiencing the emotion depends on the validity of those reasons. If an attitude can be destroyed by the consideration of the facts, it cannot be the right attitude and hence cannot on an integration theory be a valuable attitude.

That point is stressed again and again in the earlier chapters of the "Principles". The "reader", it is there insisted, "must be required to wear no blinkers, to overlook nothing which is relevant, to shut no part of himself from participation".² And Richard's whole objection to certain types of literature rests on this assertion. Art that appeals to stock responses is condemned because these imply "relatively poor organisations", that do not face all the facts and hence will not stand the test of experience. Such art, he tells us, quickly becomes "dated" and loses favour.³ Again a distinction is made between some moderately good poems (e.g., *Break, Break, Break* or Scott's *Coronach*) which achieve systematisation only by leaving something out and hence can be damaged by exposure to irony, and those of the front rank which are really comprehensive (e.g., Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale*, Scott's *Proud Maisie*) and hence need fear no irony.⁴

How can all this be reconciled with the assertion we have just noticed, that some valuable attitudes may be destroyed by consideration of objective facts, but are none the less

¹ Ibid., chap. 35.

² Ibid., p. 80.

³ Ibid., chap. 29.

⁴ Ibid., chap. 32.

valuable? Of course the point might be that the right attitude is sometimes induced by false beliefs. It is always possible to believe the right things for the wrong reasons. But it does not follow that sound reasons could not be adduced. And Richards' point is rather that many attitudes should not be based on beliefs at all. And this is quite inconsistent with his main theory.

Richards himself admits that the two positions are difficult to reconcile, and indeed that the reconciliation depends on distinctions that are for some reason unutterable. "The distinctions required had better be left to the reader's imagination than laboured further in the faulty terminology which alone at present is available."¹ But he thinks that this much can be said: that the distinction is one between "scientific belief" and "emotive belief". Scientific belief is defined as "a readiness to act in all circumstances and all connections as though the reference symbolised by the proposition were true". In emotive belief "readiness to act as though some references were true is often involved, but the connections and circumstances in which this readiness remains are narrowly restricted. Similarly the extent of the action is ordinarily limited." Emotive beliefs are "beliefs held as conditions for further effects for the sake of the imaginative experiences they make possible".² Attitudes then may be based on emotive beliefs, but should not be based on scientific beliefs. And we should not make the vulgar mistake of confusing them.

There is, I think, a confusion here. We may find it fruitful to indulge in speculations of the type: "If A were possible, what would follow?" But we make these speculations to enlarge our knowledge of the real world: that is to say, to obtain "scientific beliefs". Take Richards' own example, the "medical impossibility" of Desdemona's last speech. What is revealed to the audience is what Desdemona's

¹ Ibid, p. 276.

² Ibid., p. 277.

state of mind would have been if she had lived long enough to realise the circumstances of her death. She reveals two facts about herself: (*a*) that she is guiltless, *but* (*b*) that she nevertheless forgives her husband. The speech thus reveals to us facts about Desdemona's character. The impossibility of these facts being revealed to us in the particular way does not matter. What is important is the revelation that Desdemona was such and such a kind of person. Admittedly a mere grasp of these facts without the corresponding emotions which are roused in us by the poignancy of the whole situation might not be very valuable. But what the drama shows to us is the effects and ramifications of relationships between various persons with different characters. The rousing in us of certain emotions implies a further assertion that these effects are pitiable or terrible or whatever it may be. If we accept the assertions we are certainly "ready to act in all circumstances as if they were true". If we do not accept them we say that the drama is poor.

In other cases it may be that we accept certain propositions provisionally in order to see what the effect of accepting them would be on our emotions, actions, beliefs, etc. But we do this in order to understand how people accepting these propositions will behave. In other words, we are making assertions about people holding certain beliefs, and these we accept absolutely. It is not for the sake of the resulting emotions alone that we make the experiment, but for the sake of understanding those people. Experiencing the emotions is a step towards understanding them; but the resultant attitude—the sympathy we gain—cannot be destroyed by any demonstration of the falsity of the original proposition. Our conclusions about people holding it will still be valid.

It seems to me that in all this Richards is confusing two totally distinct theories: a moral theory, and an æsthetic experience theory. Both start, it will be remembered, from the assumption that what is valuable in literature is the "attitude" or "experience" conveyed to the reader. The question

between them is whether the attitude is valuable in itself or because it conduces to right living. The first alternative is affirmed by æsthetic experience theories, the second by moral theories. Now in so far as Richards insists on "objectless beliefs" and attitudes that are not attitudes to anything, he is asserting that emotions are valuable in themselves. That is to say, he is adopting the view that the function of literature is to convey a special experience, the experience, namely, of having as many emotions as possible at the same time. But his integration theory is of course a moral theory and on it we can only count as valuable those attitudes which lead to right living. Richards attempts to prove that these multi-emotional attitudes do lead to right living, but in that, as I have tried to show, he fails signally. The gratification of varied impulses is something quite different from the mere experiencing of varied emotions. Especially is that so (a) if you understand by emotions the interplay of purely physical impulses in the nervous system; and (b) if your emotions have no "objective reference", are not emotions towards anything.

It is because Richards confuses two totally distinct theories that he is able to extend his account to include music, painting and sculpture as well as literature. One of the prime difficulties of æsthetics is to find a theory that will apply to all the arts. Literature, on the whole, seems to call for some moral theory. It deals with human relationships and it must therefore take account of the conclusions about these which we draw from actual experience. But the other arts seem to call for some "æsthetic experience" theory. Richards claims to have overcome the difficulty; but he does so, I suggest, only because of a confusion.

What then are we to say of Richards' theory generally? Summarising, there are three main points:

1. The integration or reconciliation of the desires of the individual does not in itself solve the whole ethical problem; but there is reason to believe that it may be of service to ethics. And if it is the function of literature to achieve

integration then what has value for literature will have moral value.

2. But achieving integration in this sense cannot mean simply experiencing a large number of different emotions at the same time. Integration can, on the contrary, only be achieved by an understanding of relevant relationships in the sphere of human conduct. Emotions are relevant here because our emotional attitudes towards things or situations are involved in understanding them. But this does not mean that emotions in themselves, without objective reference, can help towards integration.

3. Emotions without objective reference can, on the contrary, only have value on some variant of an "æsthetic experience" theory, which would involve the assertion that literary value is different altogether from moral value. Richards is thus maintaining two distinct and mutually inconsistent theories.

THE *COGITO* OF DESCARTES.¹

By JOHN ANDERSON.

THE *cogito ergo sum* of Descartes has been variously regarded by subsequent philosophers, and much discussion has been given to such questions as whether it is an inference or not, and, if it is, what conclusion is drawn from what premise (or premises) and whether the inference is valid or invalid. As we shall see, the difficulties here are largely due to rationalistic confusion as to what inference is; but they can best be resolved by an examination of the line of argument by which the formula itself is arrived at, and an exhibition of the confusions which that argument involves. It can thus be shown that the *cogito* as it appears in Descartes (i.e., as a "principle" or an "intuition" or a "rational certainty") is utterly without foundation, and that, as a consequence, certain conceptions which have quite a wide currency among present-day philosophers—particularly the conceptions of "subject" and the "subjective"—must likewise be abandoned.

First of all, however, we may observe that Descartes's own presentation of the case would naturally give rise to divergent interpretations, the point being that he *has* no consistent view, that he exhibits the instability which is characteristic of rationalism. Thus it might be said that, in spite of its containing *ergo*, the *cogito* cannot be taken as an inference, since Descartes specifically refers to it as a *proposition* which he has discovered to be true, and uses it to illustrate the general conditions under which a proposition can be true and certain. Again, it might seem fairly easy, even if the *cogito* were taken as an inference, to dismiss

¹ The reference is particularly to the *Discourse on Method*, Part IV. Quotations are from Veitch's translation.

that interpretation of it according to which it proceeds from an activity to a substance which has that activity (*cogito ergo ego*, so to speak). For, as Gilson emphasises in the notes to his edition of the *Discourse*, the Latin text reads *Ego cogito, ergo sum, sive existo*, so that the *ego* is in the premise, if premise it be. Moreover, as Descartes immediately goes on to determine the substance as one "whose whole essence or nature consists in thinking", this would seem to reduce the "inference" to *cogito ergo cogito*. Nevertheless, remembering that rationalism is a philosophy of essences or identities, we may consider that the reduction of inference to identity is what Descartes's argument really amounts to, and that the conception of "substance" is only one of the devices by which the emptiness of the position is concealed. A more detailed examination will, I think, bear out these points.

Descartes, as we have noted, wished to establish the *cogito* as a true and certain proposition, as contrasted with propositions which may or may not be true but at least can be doubted. He had decided, in the search for truth, "to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which I could suppose the least ground for doubt, in order to ascertain whether after that there remained aught in my belief that was wholly indubitable". On this basis he found he could reject the evidence of the senses, the reasonings of geometry, and, indeed, all the objects that ever entered his mind. "But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat." This result he formulates as the *cogito* ("I think, hence I am"); this is what remains in his belief that is wholly indubitable.

The mechanism of the doubting process, then, is the recognition of something in our belief, some proposition that we entertain, which it is possible to consider false. Thus we can say "I think that grass is green, but I may be wrong" or "I think that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles, but I may be wrong"; these doubts are quite *possible*, i.e., they contain no internal contradiction.

But we cannot say "I think that I think, but I may be wrong", because even in being wrong we should be thinking, and thus there is contradiction in supposing that we are wrong in this case. It is worth noting that, in following Descartes's own version of the procedure of doubting, we have arrived simply at *I think* as that which is not subject to doubt. As Descartes indicates, it is "I, who thus thought" that must be something, and this something (as previously pointed out) is "a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking"; so that what must be something is only *my thinking*—or, if we care to press the argument further, only *thinking*. Waiving the latter point, we must insist that the formula Descartes has been able to reject as involving contradiction is "I think that *cogito*, but I may be wrong" and not "I think that *cogito ergo sum*, but I may be wrong".

The rejection of views on the ground of the contradictions they involve is, of course, a regular part of rationalistic or identity-philosophy, and always depends on ambiguity or confusion of some kind. Descartes's confusions can be more clearly exposed if we emphasise the differences between the concluding doubts which, in the above examples, have been expressed by the same formula, "I may be wrong". The question, we have noted, is one of possibility and necessity. Thus doubting that grass is green, or considering that our belief to that effect is not certain, may be expressed as "I think that grass is green, but it is possible that grass is not green". The corresponding attempt to doubt that we think would take the form "I think that I think, but it is possible that I do not think". And the argument is that, whereas there is no contradiction in the first case and thus it is possible to accept the contradictory of "Grass is green", there is a contradiction involved in the second case and thus it is not possible to accept the contradictory of "I think". In other words, to deny that "I think" is self-refuting, and "I think" is certain or, as it is sometimes put, "follows from the principle of contradiction". Actually, of course, nothing follows from the principle of contradiction, and no proposition

is "self-contradictory". It may here be remarked that those who contend that a "self-contradictory" proposition must be rejected as false, and thus its contradictory accepted as true and certain, do not observe that, since it is its own contradictory, its contradictory also must be false. But, while it is important to observe that there is confusion in any postulation of "rational" or self-evident truths, our immediate concern is with the confusions underlying the *cogito* in particular.

Returning, then, to our last formulation of the Cartesian doubt, and putting in brackets the proposition to be examined in each case, we have "I think (that grass is green), but it is possible that grass is not green"; "I think (that I think), but it is possible that I do not think". The latter formula is rejected as absurd, and it is asserted, on the contrary, that "I think (that I think), and it is *not* possible that I do not think", i.e., it is necessary that I think. Now, as regards the rejected formula, the point is that its absurdity depends not on the second, bracketed "I think", but on the *first*, and the second, which was the one to be examined and established, has not been examined at all. This is clearly seen if we put something else in the brackets; if we say "I think (that grass is green), but it is possible that I do not think", the absurdity remains exactly as before. On the other hand, if we retain the second "I think" and substitute something else for the first, if we say, for example, "It is said (that I think), but it is possible that I do not think", there is now no absurdity. It appears, then, that the bracketed part has nothing to do with the rejection of the formula, and that the contradiction on which Descartes's "demonstration" depends is that which is involved in saying "I think, but it is possible that I do not think"—a contradiction which would appear equally in the assertion, "Grass is green, but it is possible that grass is not green".

Thus it is not the case that the proposition "I think" has been subjected to the doubting process and has withstood the test and emerged as indubitable. It is the first "I think",

the one that is common to all the formulæ and stands outside the brackets, that remains at the end of the process; and it remains merely *asserted*, as it was to begin with. Descartes, as he has told us, has set out to examine his thoughts, and, in saying that he is doing so, he implies that he has thoughts or does think. We take this as a piece of information that he possesses, something he believes or has found to be the case, just as he might find that grass is green. Formally the two beliefs are equally capable of being contradicted; the proposition "I am not thinking" is no more absurd (even if it be false) than the proposition "Grass is not green". But it is possible that in actual fact we do not contradict or doubt either of the original propositions, that we regard them both as pieces of correct information; and if Descartes really doubts or disbelieves that grass is green, it is only because of other beliefs that he holds. In any case, whatever may be the beliefs and doubts of any particular person, no distinction at all has been indicated between propositions dubitable and indubitable in themselves, between mere contingencies and "first principles".

It may be noted, incidentally, that at best the proposition "I, Descartes, think" would be certain only for Descartes, that anyone else might doubt it freely, so that Descartes would not on his own showing have established any proposition that was certain in itself. That is why he has to go on from *his* self-certainty to *the* self-certain (the "perfect being"); he has to set up a universal (or essential) Essence in order to support the conception of himself as a particular essence, viz., a thinking essence. On the other hand, he has to import his essence theory into some empirical field in order to appear to have anything definite to say; a vague, general rationalism, in the form, say, that ultimately there must be a "reason" for everything, would not have the force of the *cogito*—and, of course, would not have the same mischievous effect on the empirical study of mind.

The method, however, is the same in either case; "perfection" and *cogito* are alike made to appear to be self-

establishing (even if the latter has afterwards to be additionally established by the former), and this can only be done by means of some sort of equivocation, the removal of which shows that nothing at all has been established. In the case we have considered, when the second "I think" is removed as irrelevant, we are left with identity masquerading as inference; we are left with "I think, and it is not possible that I do not think" or "I think, and it is necessary that I think"—in other words, we are left, after all, with *cogito ergo cogito*, and we then see that the *ergo cogito* is superfluous, and that the first *cogito* is not established but merely asserted. More generally, it can be said that the very notion of "certainties" or "necessary truths" is an attempted amalgamation of truth and implication, a uniting of a proposition with a relation between propositions in the supposition that it has that relation to itself—just as the theory of "ideas" attempts to unite being true and being believed in the supposition of something whose truth resides in its being believed. The conception of "that which establishes itself by *thinking* itself" is, then, only a special case of the general confusion of character and relation. And it is on the same logical footing as that which, as we may put it, establishes itself by establishing itself—the necessary being which must exist (or necessarily is) *because* it is a necessary being.

This last conception may be further elucidated by the consideration, hitherto deferred, of the use of *sum* in the Cartesian formula. Why, it may be asked, does not Descartes confine himself to the "I think" which his method proves, if it proves anything? As his own further argument shows, nothing else that can be attributed to his *ego* can stand the test; it is on that account that he is said to be a thinking essence and nothing more. And that is why such formulæ as "I walk, therefore I am" are not accepted as alternatives to the *cogito*. Logically, as far as *sum* is concerned, there is no difference between the two cases; "I am walking" implies "I am" no more and no less than "I am thinking" does. In actually distinguishing them, in saying that my walking does not

imply existence whereas my thinking does, Descartes is saying that the latter supposition is bound to be *true*, while the former is not. And the only support for this contention is to be found in the non-contradiction of "I think that I walk, but it is possible that I do not walk", i.e., as we have seen, in the non-contradiction of "I think, but it is possible that I do not walk". This, of course, is no more reason for describing my walking as doubtful than is "I walk, but it is possible that I do not think" for describing my thinking as doubtful. But while the fact that my walking is not my thinking is the sole reason for doubting that I walk, and the identity that my thinking is my thinking is the sole reason for asserting that I think, while, in fact, *sum* is equally irrelevant to what is rejected and to what is accepted in accordance with the "method", its inclusion in the latter has the advantage of making it appear something more than an identity, and at the same time conveys its "acceptability".

Sum, then, in the first instance, appears in the formula to convey the notion of truth, of a truth which is *added* to the "content", and which, as added by means of *ergo*, appears further as a necessary or guaranteed truth, though nothing has been said or can be said to justify such a notion. The addition, moreover, helps to conceal the fact that truth is already conveyed by the copula of *any* assertion; so that to assert "I am walking" is to assert the truth of "I am walking", and, though this can be questioned, the question is as to the truth of "I am walking" or the truth of "I am not walking", and nothing can be added to the belief in one or the other. There are various propositions which we believe and the contradictories of which we disbelieve; but the *sum* is introduced to make it appear that we can do something more than believing. In the second place it is introduced to give some particularity, some positive character, to the doctrine which is being developed, by emphasising the *ego* as distinct from the *cogitans* or the *cogitatio*. Actually it is impossible on Descartes's theory to distinguish one cogitator or cogitation from another. When he says that he is a substance whose

whole essence consists in thinking, he annuls any possible distinction between himself and another thinking substance; yet he is compelled to say so, because his thinking is the one thing that fulfils his conditions of indubitability or "essentiality". The *sum*, then, is a means of smuggling in distinctions, of which, strictly speaking, an essence or "identity" theory can make nothing. In the same way, Socrates falls into inconsistencies when he attempts to distinguish one man from another and, at the same time, to make manhood the essence of all of them. But the fact that we are immediately aware of such distinctions tends to make us, in accepting them, overlook their incompatibility with whatever rationalistic suppositions are in question.

Thirdly, the use of *sum* in the formula is a step towards the establishment of *the* perfect or necessary. In reducing an empirical fact to an essence, Descartes has amalgamated subject and predicate; the fact of "my thinking" is equated to the fact (existence) of "myself". But so long as the distinction remains between existence and what exists, so long as the copula appears even in the distorted form of an attribute, there is a danger of the re-establishment of the distinction between subject and predicate, i.e., of the recognition of facts ("brute" facts, as the phrase goes) which simply have to be learned, instead of being spun out of some essence or "explained" by a "reason". Consistently with this recognition, of course, anything that can be called an explanation is simply a relation among facts and is itself a "brute" fact. To save the Cartesian doctrine of "transparency", then, that which is to be seen through has to be further reduced; the step has to be taken of amalgamating subject and existence, finding something whose essence "comprises" existence. And so we have the verbalism of the ontological argument, the very emptiness of which gives it plausibility, while leaving those who accept it free to fill it out with any material that they prefer—to choose which of two opposite conditions they will call a "perfection" and regard as sustained by *the* perfect. The very fact that there is nothing there makes the essential

existence of the essentially existing all the more "transparent" to uncritical minds. And, while there is no *logical* passage from this to minor transparencies, while Descartes is involved in fresh equivocations in trying to show how there can be any essence but Essence, how, in particular, there can be an *ego*, his principal device, as has been suggested, is already present in the notion of "perfection". The *sum*, then, has served its purpose in the fabrication of this rationalistic edifice, both by its identification of an actual thing with an essence and by its treatment of truth as an attribute.

The foregoing argument, if it be sound, shows that criticism of Descartes must be on grounds of logic, and the persistence of rationalistic confusions of the functions of subject, predicate and copula (as in the distinction of an "is" of existence from the "is" of predication, and so forth) shows that such criticism is not of merely historical interest. But it is on the psychological side that Descartes has been specially influential; and, though criticism of rationalistic psychology must still be logical (i.e., must be criticism of rationalism), it is important to bring out the particular ways in which mental events are confused and obscured by Cartesian assumptions. In the first instance, however, it should be observed that those who have followed Descartes in this matter have not in general repeated his argument, that many of them, indeed, have so disguised the introduction of the *cogito* into their theories that they appear to be anti-Cartesian. Thus Berkeley, in the second paragraph of his "Principles", remarks that "besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering about them"; and here the *cogito* is introduced by the use of the simple word *besides*. Again, Hume, in spite of his criticism, later in the "Treatise", of those philosophers "who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our *self*", has assumed the *cogito* from the very beginning in speaking of the objects of our knowledge as "perceptions of the human mind"; i.e.,

he has assumed, like Berkeley, that they are known *as known* and thus as relative to something else which is on a different footing. And Reid, while in the Introduction to his "Inquiry" he raises explicit objections to the *cogito*, implicitly accepts it, in the same place, in putting forward a doctrine of *inner knowledge* (when he says, e.g., that a man's own mind "is the only subject he can look into"), a doctrine which he adheres to throughout. In all these views, "subject" is set over against "object", self-knowledge against other-knowledge, and thus the Cartesian confusion persists.

The problem naturally arises of relating these two forms of knowledge, and it is just as insoluble as the general problem of relating two essences. We may take for example the way in which Berkeley completes his statement of the position in the paragraph referred to. "This perceiving, active being is what I call *mind, spirit, soul, or myself*. By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them, *wherein they exist*, or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived; for the existence of an idea consists in being perceived." (Italics in text.) The minor problem of *how we know* the relation between the thinking essence and a thought essence is one that Berkeley cannot solve. For when he says "I see the table", and since he holds that the table is known by way of "ideas" and the "I" by a "notion" (another form in which he introduces the *cogito*), then, whether the "see" is to be known by way of "idea" or "notion", he cannot say that the whole situation "I see the table" can be known in either way—not, at least, without undermining his whole distinction—and so cannot take it to be known at all. Alexander is placed in a similar difficulty in his Cartesian theory of "enjoyment", since, on his assumptions, "I contemplate the table" can be known neither by enjoyment nor by contemplation—so that he can arrive at a consistent position only by giving up Cartesianism and admitting that there is no knowledge but contemplation.

The more important question, however, is that of the occurrence of the relation itself. For Berkeley, "I" exist in

knowing, and the table exists in being known; but the whole situation "I see the table" cannot exist in knowing and cannot exist in being known—it cannot exist as "subject" or as "object". That is to say, with the retention of the essence doctrine, it cannot exist at all. On the other hand, if it does exist, then both "I" and the table exist in that situation, and therefore do not exist, respectively, "in knowing" and "in being known". The difficulty is not met by any "supra-relational" theory, any doctrine of the "relativity" of relations or of objects as "aspects" (or expressions of the essence) of a subject. Any such theory depends for its very statement on the assertion of relations. If the "identity behind the diversity" is not to be the empty "essentially essential", if it is really to be diversely "expressed", then the various expressions are variously related to one another and to that "of" which they are expressions—in fact, we have a set of interrelated situations, no one of which can be "higher" or more essential than any other, since, as we have seen, its superiority would then have no way, higher or lower, of existing. The case can be met only by a logic of situations, which treats mental situations, and non-mental situations, and situations embracing the mental and the non-mental, as all of the same order, none having any peculiar "inwardness" or "outwardness". If we care to put it so, we can call each of them "inward", as having its own character, and "outward", as being distinct from other things. Externality is, of course, a symmetrical relation; when people say that certain things are external to them (or are "in the external world"), they imply that they are external to the things. Thus, if we could take existing in the external world simply to mean existing under conditions of externality, we could say that the mental exists in the external world. And in treating A, B, and A knows B, as alike situations, we are confronted with no greater difficulty than in treating thunder, lightning, and thunder follows lightning, as alike situations—remembering always that situations interpenetrate and exist in wider situations.

Any question of mentality, then, is a question of fact; if we know the mental, we know it as a certain sort of thing, distinct from and related to other sorts of things. And that means that we know it not "inwardly" but outwardly, that it is one of the things which, when we recognise that they are known, we call "objects". If that is not so, if it is a question not of our knowing mentality as a particular sort of thing but of our knowing "mentally", if, in other words, being mental is not a distinguishing-mark of what is known on one occasion rather than another, then it is equally not a distinguishing-mark of what knows but is just another expression for existing. The term "mental", in short, would simply have to be dropped; that is the upshot of Idealism. However, we do speak of the mental, we do say that minds know, and we think, in saying so, that both the relation and the thing related are different from other things and other relations (e.g., that trees grow). And here as elsewhere, in our knowledge of minds as in our knowledge of trees, it is a question of the assertion of propositions any one of which can be significantly denied, i.e., of the raising of issues which are settled, in each case, by what we believe to be true. We may directly observe the truth in question, or, when we do not (and even sometimes when we do, viz., when other people disagree with us), we may draw inferences from what we have observed (or from what is agreed on). This is the method of settling issues whether in the mental or in the non-mental field, whether the subject is admittedly one of controversy or is allegedly one of "certainty".

Here, incidentally, we may remark on how the procedure of actual inquiry differs from the Cartesian "method". There is, it must be emphasised, no such thing as absolute doubt; there is no question of adopting an attitude of doubting in general or of finding a proposition to be doubtful in itself. We doubt only in relation to what we believe, i.e., to what we do not doubt. If we are doubtful whether A is B, this is possible only if we have some knowledge of both A and B. Descartes himself cannot express his doubts except in terms

of what he does not doubt. As we have seen, he assumes from the beginning, as a matter of information, that he thinks; and every word he uses in working out his argument implies something that he does not doubt. It is only because there are certain things that he believes, without doubting, that he can arrive at the view that his senses sometimes deceive him; and there is no question of his thinking that "all is false", since, if a proposition is false, its contradictory is true. Doubt arises, then, only in particular cases, and is settled not by what is indubitable but by what is believed. Propositions are not doubtful or certain; we doubt and are certain—and sometimes when we are certain, we are wrong. Thus we may hold with assurance certain propositions about ourselves or our minds; alternatively, we may be doubtful about them, or we may have our assertions challenged. Such an issue can be settled only by observation and inference from observations. And, in particular, the class of propositions (variously placed and dated) "I am thinking" has among its members some that have been doubted and none that could not be made a matter of controversy. As we have seen, it is only the mechanism of identity and ambiguity that makes this appear to be an exceptional case.

It may be argued, of course, that, even if the matter is a controversial one, even if we can make mistakes about the "subject" as we can about "objects", that is no reason for confusing the two—that there can be an empirical inquiry into the facts of the "subjective" life. What we have to remember here is that the "subjectivists" are dealing, however confusedly, with certain actualities. In the same way, Descartes started with knowledge of his thinking as a fact, and it was this fact that he erected into an essence or certainty; this explains how some who would reject the ontological argument, are still prepared to accept the *cogito*, though actually without the general notion of that which is in itself there would be no special notion of that which thinks itself. So, the familiar arguments regarding "subject" and "object" start from the fact that in the situation of knowledge

there are the two things, what knows and what is known, and thus that we are falsifying the situation if we confuse the two, just as we should do if, in the relation of eating, we confused the eater with the eaten. But, erroneous as this would be, and while it is possible that an eater should never be eaten, it also happens that some eaters are eaten. Now, when the subjectivists say that we are falsifying a "subject" if we represent it as an object, they are saying that what knows can never be known. And while, if they adhered to that, they would have to say that there can be no theory of what knows, they make confusion worse confounded by holding that the knower is *always* known—only not known as an object, but known in its true character as knower; in other words, known by the inner or identical knowledge of the *cogito*.

The virulent rationalism of this doctrine is evident. It is only on the assumption of a knowing *essence* that it could be supposed that, if X knows, to know X is to know that it knows. Further, it is only if knowing is the "whole nature" of what knows that it can be argued that the very same thing which had an object could not be an object in another relationship. Eater and eaten are distinct, yet what eats may be eaten. Above and below are distinct, yet what is above something is always below something else. The "domain" and the "converse domain" of a relation can have any relation from co-extension to exclusion; we can determine the matter only empirically in each case, and we do constantly make such statements as that we know X and X knows Y. Indeed, in saying these things, we profess to have knowledge of what knows and what is known by a single act and in a single situation, i.e., as objects occurring within a more extensive object, and the bare assertion that "the knower is not the known" casts not the slightest doubt on these contentions. The weakness of the theory of "subject" appears finally in the treatment of a *relation*, knowing, as the "nature" of what knows. Certainly, as Leibniz saw, if we are going to have a theory of natures, we shall have to bring its relations within

each nature—but he himself could explain away some relations only by bringing in others, and it is, as we have noted, on the question of relations that rationalism most conspicuously breaks down. As regards knowledge, then, there is nothing in the subjectivist argument (and likewise nothing in experience) to confute the views that, if something knows, it need not be known, that, if it is known, it need not be known that it knows, and that, if it is known and even known to know, it is what we call an “object”—or, what is more important, it is a situation or occurrence, differing in quality from other things that know and from things that do not know, just as they differ from one another.

Thus there is no question of setting mind apart from objects, of giving it a special way of being known (any more than of existing), viz., “in itself”; the only questions are whether minds are known and, if so, what is known about them, what situations they are found to exist in, what other things they are distinguished from and connected with. The theory of “subject”, denying that minds are anything in particular, leads straight to the denial of mind altogether in the doctrine of behaviourism. Now behaviourism is to be commended in that it insists on dealing with what is observed and rejecting the “inner light”. Those who hold that there are two sources of psychological knowledge, “introspection” of ourselves and observation of the behaviour of others (and of ourselves also, since this forms the link between the other two), are in as untenable a position as we have seen Berkeley’s to be; they can establish no connection between the “introspected” and the observed—or else they are supposing such a combination of inner and outer knowledge as simply annuls the distinction. But, since the behaviourists do not realise that minds are observed just as other things are, they have to treat the mental as simply a name for certain sequences, so that, whereas in the ordinary course of things A is observed to be followed by B, in the “mental” course of things C and not B is found to follow. On this view, “mind” means a magical setting aside of the course of nature. The only

scientific attitude is to admit a difference not in the types of sequence, but in the antecedent conditions in the two cases, and to try to discover what that difference is. And this is something that we quite frequently do; we have indeed a wide knowledge of mental qualities (kinds of emotion); the only thing we are not acquainted with is mental "inwardness".

It is worth emphasising that knowledge of mind is obtained as much by observation of other people's minds as by observation of our own. The knowledge of other minds presents insuperable difficulties for the subjectivist. Unless it is to be said that we are "members of one another" (i.e., unless we are to adopt the "aspect" theory, the theory of one ultimate Subject, which culminates in the denial of all distinctions), it must be admitted that we cannot have inner knowledge of another "subject", and yet, according to subjectivism, we should be falsifying it in knowing it as an object. Alexander's attempt to get over the difficulty by his theory of "assurance" merely adds to the original problem of relating the enjoyed to the contemplated an equally insoluble problem of relating the "assured" to either. The theory is so far valuable, however, in that "assurance" is taken to be a form of direct knowledge; what is required to complete the argument is the rejection of the conception of "subject" (in the form, in this particular case, of the "enjoyed") or of "self"—as if a mind itself and a stone itself were not alike just a mind and a stone. Once this is done, it can no more be contended that, as psychologists, we are interested in other minds only in a secondary and subsidiary way, and that our own minds remain as the essential subject of our inquiries and the test of all the rest, than that, as physiologists, we are primarily concerned with our own bodies and only secondarily with others. On the contrary, much of our knowledge of ourselves is arrived at through our knowledge of others, and, while we can make mistakes in either connection, we are at least (as Marx has pointed out) not in the habit of taking a man's own estimate of himself as likely, on

account of its "intimacy", to be the best we can obtain—least of all, as being "certain", though on the subjectivist theory it would have to be.

As already indicated, the question of the knowledge of mind has been especially confused by the taking of a relation, thinking, as the mind's "nature"; and this applies equally to the question of the conditions under which minds exist. Thus the doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism is vitiated from the start by the fact that what is supposed to run parallel to brain processes is "thought", and this, in the usual sense of what is thought, is commonly not mental at all. There is, of course, the additional objection that parallelism (like correspondence) merely suggests a relation without stating what the relation is—just as the contention that "thought is a function of the brain" is defective in not stating *what* function it is. Nevertheless, none but subjectivist objections have ever been urged to the view that it is certain brain processes that think and also that it is certain brain processes that are mental (emotional), i.e., that in the parallelist theory the psychical has been put on the wrong side. The main *logical* point is that, when we say "A is parallel to B", we are asserting the existence of a situation of the same order as any that can be said to exist in either of the "parallel series" and so are failing to keep the series separate. But this does not prevent but rather assists the putting forward of the psychological position that, in the case of what is thought, the "parallelism" between it and brain processes is just the *cognitive* relation, i.e., that they know or think it, and that, in the case of what thinks (assuming this to be mental), the "parallelism" is just *predication*, i.e., that certain brain processes *are* mental. As has been said, the only objections to this commonsense view are based on the doctrine of "subject", which is also responsible for the widespread belief that what is mental must think—a belief which has had a retarding influence on the acceptance of the important contributions of Freud and his followers to psychology.

In this connection we may consider the arguments of Feuerbach (as outlined by Sidney Hook¹) against "absolute materialism"—all the more because it is principally with this form of materialism, and with some justice, according to Hook, in view of his later work, that the name of Feuerbach is associated. "To say that thought is a material activity is as senseless as to say that gravitation has a taste or smell, for according to Feuerbach a proposition has meaning only when the predicate is of the same generic kind (*Gattung*) as the subject." Here we have a direct, but easily answered, attack on a situational logic. There is no such thing as gravitation in general, there is only what gravitates; and it is *not* senseless to say that what gravitates has a taste or smell. Any difficulty there is in calling thought a material activity is due to the fact that thought is a relation, just as there would be difficulty in saying that "on" or "after" was a material activity. But there is no difficulty at all, when A is on B, in saying that A is a material activity, and B is too, and while it might be false to say that *A's being on B* is a material activity, it would not be senseless. In other words, A, B, and A's being on B are alike situations, which we have to observe to see what characters they respectively have and what they have not. Similarly, there is nothing senseless in saying that what thinks is a material activity or that what is thought is a material activity or even (though it may not be true) that A's thinking B is a material activity. We can settle such questions not on the basis of forms of predication (ways of being, characterisation of a thing in its own "categories"), which, as we have seen, can never be related, but only on the basis of observation—assuming, in this particular case, that we know what quality "materiality" is.

"To call thinking a function of the brain", says Feuerbach, "is to say nothing about *what* thinking is. . . . Such a characterisation does not characterise. . . . Thought must be something *more* than, something quite *different* from, a

¹ Article on "Feuerbach" in the *Modern Monthly* (New York) for December, 1935; section on "Critique of Absolute Materialism", pp. 366-370.

mere activity of the brain". (Italics in Hook's text.) We have seen that there is a certain amount of force in the objection to the "function" formula; and, even if we say that the brain thinks, it is true that we are not then saying what thinking is, just as, when we say that A is on B, we are not saying what "being on" is—though we may know it perfectly well. But certainly we cannot know relations without having some knowledge of the things related, and thus it is false to say that "it is only in terms of thought that the nature of thinking can be understood". This contention is plausible only because "thought" is commonly used to mean both terms of the relation as well as the relation itself. If we adhere strictly to Feuerbach's description of thought as the *product* of thinking, we cannot admit that anything is to be understood by understanding something else that it is related to, whether the relation be "producing" or any other.

Again, Feuerbach takes up an equivocal position in the matter of the "more" and the "different". If thought *is not* a brain-activity, there is no point in saying that it is "more" than a "mere" brain-activity. If it comes to that, any brain-activity is more than a mere brain-activity, any X is more than a mere X, i.e., it is not the "nature", X. In other words, any brain process differs from other brain processes, and any mental process, if it is a brain process, will differ from other mental processes, from other brain processes, and from other processes of whatever kind—while at the same time there will be respects in which it does not differ from such other processes. Thus there is no question of "mereness" (except for rationalists); there is only the question whether mental processes actually are brain processes, and Feuerbach has said nothing to show that they are not.

It is Feuerbach, indeed, who is treating mentality as "mere", or treating it merely as producing "ideas". It is not true that "the clue to our mentality is *what* we think", though it is certainly *a* clue, granted that we already have some knowledge of mentality and its relations. There can be no

objection to the "study of ideas" (i.e., of our demands), a study which will involve us in a broader consideration of the movements in which we are caught up, and which greatly affect our mentality. It has always to be remembered that minds exist under conditions, and that we cannot study them without taking account of some of these conditions. Actually, this is just what Feuerbach seems to neglect; at least, although he holds that without body there can be no mind, the proposal to treat of mind in its own terms leads logically not, as Hook says, to a *relative* autonomy of thought but to an unconditioned or self-conditioned mental sphere—in fact, it leaves us with nothing more or less than the *cogito*. Rejecting rationalism, however, recognising the interconnection of situations, we have still to insist on the *distinction*, as well as the connection, between mind and its surroundings—and also, of course, on the fact that it conditions or affects them just as they do to it. This is a matter which has been inadequately grasped in the Marxist movement; the interest in mentality has been almost entirely subordinated to an interest in the larger social movements into which minds enter. And, while this has occasioned many mistakes in regard to these movements themselves, it is itself facilitated by the *cogito*, from which no Marxist thinkers have shaken themselves free. For, when mind is treated as a bare identity, it is natural that anything else will be discussed rather than mind—on that assumption, indeed, there is nothing to discuss.

It will be seen, then, that acceptance of the *cogito* has been an abiding fetter on the observation of minds, and that its decisive rejection is a condition of any considerable progress in psychological science. It has been observed that there is no logical difference between observation of mental processes in oneself and observation of them in others; the ordinary person does both, and it would appear that the psychologist advances most rapidly when he develops both. Certainly there are difficulties, constant possibilities of error, involved in the observation of minds; we regularly make mistakes both about ourselves and about other people, and even the trained analyst,

though he has found out many of the mistakes to avoid, is obviously not infallible. But this brings us at once to the point that there are difficulties in the observation of anything; and the way to meet them is just to follow out the general conditions of inquiry—particularly, the forming of hypotheses and the testing of them by what we *can* observe. Acceptance of the *cogito*, however, places insuperable difficulties in the way of psychological science; and, in so far as it has been accepted, i.e., granted that even those who have accepted it have inevitably reverted from time to time to commonsense views and that only so have discoveries been made, it has been a tremendous hindrance to inquiry.

Much could be said about the psychological basis of the doctrine itself—about the fetishism which lies at the root of all rationalism, about the motives which lead men to seek the “safe and certain”, about the very close connection between the notion of “salvation” and that of the *ego*. Much could be said, again, about its social connections, about the appearance of the *cogito* in a period of rising individualism, and so forth. But, interesting as these questions may be, they are at any rate subsequent to its logical rebuttal. And, considering it simply from that point of view, we can still describe it as one of the greatest impositions in the history of human thinking.

REVIEWS.

ZUR GRUNDLEGUNG DER ONTOLOGIE. By Nicolai Hartmann.
Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and Leipzig, 1935.

The first volume of the life work of Nicolai Hartmann, a new critical Ontology, has been published. It contains four preliminary investigations and an introduction, in which the question is put and answered: "Why must we return to Ontology?"

Ontology has slept for nearly two hundred years. But the old problems, known from the Metaphysics of Aristotle, and the controversy between Nominalism and Realism, are still cardinal problems for us. They are actual, if we have the eyes to see them. Our time is tired of problems. But since the beginning of our century, a new interest in metaphysical problems has grown up. Philosophical thinking without an ontological foundation is impossible. "Something" must be thought, and this "something" brings forth the questions of "being", "existence", "reality".

Ontological problems come in everywhere. Even *Relativism* is not free of them. It would not be possible to prove a thing right or wrong, if there were nothing existing.

The *scientist* operates with space, time, matter, movement. But he does not tell us what they really are, and still less does he explain "action" and "reaction", or the great mystery "organism".

Psychology is concerned with "psychical reality" and "reality of the mental world". Terms like these are used as working hypotheses. But they are not yet satisfactorily interpreted. Much is therefore to be hoped of a new Ontology, dealing with all forms of reality.

The object of *Sociology*, the social sphere in which persons live together, includes many ontological problems, e.g., "objective spirit", "group", "Society". Only Ontology can answer the question, what kind of reality they have.

Logic is not *Ontology*. It is also not identical with ideality. Logic has a sphere of its own, containing even statements which do not come true. But on the other side it transgresses its field, raising ontological issues. For the fundamental laws of Logic must prove correct in reality; and this is only possible if the laws of Logic are at the same time the laws of reality.

Theory of Knowledge distinguishes between the known and the unknown. It must not be forgotten that the unknown *exists* as well as the known. And also the cognising subject is existing. Thus, theory of knowledge everywhere touches ontological ground.

For *Ethics*, using terms like person, spirit, value, it is important to learn more about what they are, how they exist, what ways of being they have.

Even the world of *beauty* is not separated from the other world. There is a problem of reality in art. How does the object appear, in the work of art and in the observer? What *is* this object?

Philosophy of history has been up to the present time largely speculation. As the process of history involves problems like teleology, determination, sense, the stratification of the world, the relation between material and spiritual forces, the road must be cleared by *Ontology* before philosophy of history will be able to do constructive work.

The *metaphysical* problems are the eternal enigmas of life. We can ignore them, misunderstand them, but they are there, as fundamental problems of philosophy. The whole future of philosophy depends upon them. And the time has come to realise it. *Metaphysics* is not completely irrational, as is often thought. The recognisable part, at any rate, shows ontological character, e.g., the ways of being, the types of determination, the laws of stratification, the categorial forms. There will always be an irrational rest, but this rest may become more and more circumscribed, and thus relatively conceivable.

The new "philosophia prima" does not mean a system. It must not anticipate a unity, but stick to the phenomena and follow the problems. Nicolai Hartmann is always historically minded. He carefully traces the questions through the history of philosophy, continuing the work where other thinkers stopped. He appears as a last link in the historical chain, receiving the problems, examining solutions, theories and failures. But he is never fettered by this chain. As an independent thinker he has his own direct approach to the phenomena.

His critical Ontology takes up many problems of old standing. The first volume, e.g., goes back to "de notione entis" and "de essentia et existentia", and also to "de singulari et universali". Later volumes will take up the old subjects "de possibili et impossibili", "de necessario et contingente", "de determinatione et indeterminatione", *Wolf's* theme: "de principio rationis sufficientis", and some others.

The first investigation in the first volume deals with: Being as Being generally ("Vom Seienden als Seienden ueberhaupt"). There is a difference between "Sein" and "Seienden", the "to be" and "the being," "esse" and "ens". Ontology is concerned with "esse", with "being as such". The difficulty is that it cannot be defined by means of Logic. It is an ultimate thing. It is simply the general of everything. It is given to us only in its differentiations, and there we have to look for it.

Therefore we must regain the natural attitude of mind, the common basis of naive and scientific thinking. This attitude is the "intentio recta", to look at the outside world as outside world. For Logic, Theory of Knowledge, and Psychology, the "intentio obliqua" is essential, the introspective attitude, reflection. This led Philosophy to the opinion that the "intentio obliqua" is a higher and generally the true scientific attitude of mind. Thus, Philosophy got on to the wrong track, and, in restoring the "intentio recta", Ontology now must return to a natural realism. Already Phenomenology had intended to go back to the things themselves, but it

arrived only at the phenomena of things, because it did not do away with the "intentio obliqua".

After dealing thoroughly with old and new theories regarding the problem of "being as being generally", the author comes to the conclusion: Being is the same in everything that exists. The most insignificant dust particle in the cosmos is not less existent than the whole cosmos.

"Reality" is not the same as "existence". Ideality "exists" as well as reality. The "being as such" (*esse*) is neither real nor ideal, it is indifferent towards determination. It is thing as well as non-thing, it is presented as well as not presented, it is "arche" as well as the world built on it. The "being as such" is identical in all that "is".

The subject of the second investigation is the relation between "being-there" and "being-thus" ("*Das Verhaeltnis von Dasein und Sosein*"). It is the old problem "*de essentia et existentia*". Many mistakes of the past are cleared up. E.g., it is wrong to ascribe existence only to the present, and not to the past and future. They "exist" too.

Existence is something fundamentally illogical. Nowhere in the world is existence as such, it is always existence of a certain kind and under certain conditions. "Being-there" and "being-thus" (*existentia* and *essentia*) are insolubly tied together, in every sphere of being. The long chain of arguments in favour of a separation between *existentia* and *essentia* has been broken. The discrimination between "being-there" and "being-thus" is problematic.

The thinkers of the past believed that *essentia* belongs exclusively to the ideal sphere, and *existentia* to the real. They were mistaken. The difference between ideality and reality is not identical with that between *essentia* and *existentia*. In ideality as well as in reality there is no "being-thus" without "being-there", and no "being-there" without "being-thus".

The third investigation of the volume is most revolutionary. It deals with the question: How is reality given to us? ("*Die Gegebenheit des realen Seins*"). It was the custom

in philosophy to approach the problem of reality under the auspices of theory of knowledge, the common opinion being that only there have we some chance of excluding subjective elements, which otherwise spoil the process. The author goes exactly the opposite way. Though admitting that the phenomena of knowledge are comparatively transparent, pure, objective, they do not prove "being as such", "existence", as strongly as the emotional-transcendental acts. Our conviction that the universe really exists, is based less upon our rational perception of it than on the resistance our own activity meets in life. And so the author dares to call on the most subjective phenomena—hitherto disregarded by strictly philosophical thinking and, at best, left to Psychology—to prove the existence of reality.

These analyses of the different groups of emotional-transcendental acts are of general interest, beyond the special purpose they serve in the ontological investigation. Transcendental acts have the form of relationship between an existing subject and an existing object. All emotional-transcendental acts have a woof of activity, energy, struggle, risk, suffering, being concerned (*Betroffensein*). To the emotional-*receptive* acts belong: to undergo, to experience, to suffer, to bear. Something happens to me. This happening is absolutely real. I do not perceive accidents, situations, they befall me. In the same way, I feel the actions of other people: how they treat me, deal with me, yes, even how they think of me. It is not that I know it by intellect only. I "feel" it. It does not depend upon my attention, my readiness to accept it. It happens.

We are standing in a stream of real events. We are born into it. There we experience our own personal life, enjoy success, suffer failure. We are also part of the lives of others, and, more or less, of public life. Political events affect us: we are inspired, overwhelmed, disgusted by them. Social conditions imprison man. He feels them as power, pressure, fate. And all that contains the severity of reality. Rational understanding and knowledge are not necessarily implied. On the

contrary, living under certain social conditions makes it difficult to understand them. There is not enough distance between observer and object.

All experience and suffering has something of "bearing". It *must* be borne. The weight of reality lies in its irresistibility and unavoidability. It can also have the form of resistance. I move a stone and feel its weight. I fight against somebody and feel his defence. I take the property of another person and learn to know the power of the law. I have an argument with somebody and feel the resistance of his own independent thinking. Everywhere, my own activity is checked by something that is real. Already the sense of touch convinces us more of the reality of the world than higher capacities of the mind.

Things are not only objects of perception, they are also objects of desire, struggle, exchange, bargain, quarrel, and so on. They form part of the sphere of human life. Wherever in the world reality is in question, the reality of the world of man, of human conditions, conflicts, destinies, the reality of the historical process is at stake.

It is a fundamental error of materialistic thinking to declare real only that which is extended. Only matter is extended, but not only matter is real. The essential quality of reality is not space, but *time*. Size, visibility, measurability, are not necessary for reality. Its fundamental characteristics are: becoming, process, happening but once (Einmaligkeit), duration, succession, being together. Reality, in the sense of Ontology, depends completely upon the existence of one real time. This real time embraces indiscriminately everything that is real, in nature, in history, in mental and physical life.

We do not live only in the present. We live in permanent view of the future. This is shown by the emotional-*prospective* acts like expectation, presentiment, readiness. To the fundamental situation of man belongs his standing in time. He cannot get out of this stream, cannot avoid it. His power of influence is restricted.

Expectation is sure of something happening in the future. It is only not sure of *what* it will be. We try to be prepared, to face whatever the future will bring, to adapt ourselves in advance. All these acts prove reality in a very strong way.

Some of the prospective acts involve a feeling of appreciation, of like or dislike. Hope, fear, longing for are of this kind. These acts of emotional-*selective anticipation* are extremely subjective. But in spite of being open to error and delusion, they all are certain that something real will happen, and that they are powerless against it. The gambler knows very well that luck or bad luck does not depend on his desires and hopes. In vain he tries to "corriger la fortune".

But man is not entirely powerless, he can interfere to a certain degree. He has will, initiative, foresight. In his emotional-*spontaneous* acts he is subject to a very curious restriction. What is already known in the stream of events cannot be changed any more. What can still be changed is not knowable.

Even "Gesinnungsakte", acts like kindness, envy, jealousy, sympathy, devotion, contempt, hate and love, are not completely within the subject. They are *interpersonal relations*. When you love or hate, you always love or hate somebody. And the object of your feeling usually knows about it, *feels* it. The reality of other persons is often given to us in acts of this kind.

Man is always acting in a certain *situation*. He has not called it, it overtakes him. After falling into a situation, he becomes its prisoner. He cannot go back, he must go through. His actions are always in time, and time neither stops nor turns back. He is not asked whether he will accept the situation or not. He cannot sneak away. No action is action too, having its consequences in the world as well as positive action. In this respect, man is not free. But he is free in regard to the way in which he answers the situation. He is always morally responsible for the consequences. And so it is that we are "forced to freedom". In the claim of the situation upon us, we meet reality.

The author follows the problem deeply into the field of Ethics. All our impressions in life are accompanied by emotional estimation, joy, delight, silent approval, refusal, and so on. But our reactions do not work in quite the same way when mere fiction is presented to us. Only values in actualisation are able to cause them. Our feeling of good and bad proves an important test for reality.

Of course, we are liable to error, illusion, delusion. The object may be quite different from what we expected. But something *is* there. And the sector of the world which can be felt, is even wider than that which can be known. There is also a qualitative distinction between acts of knowledge and acts of emotion: knowledge says better *how* a thing is, emotion *that* it is.

Interesting chapters are devoted to modern trends in philosophy and science, and to the right scientific attitude towards reality.

The last of the preliminary investigations deals with the problem and situation of ideality ("Problem und Stellung des idealen Seins"). Ideality must not be understood as unreality. It has a way of being *sui generis*. Real and ideal being are interwoven into each other. But ideal forms can also exist independently. Ideal being is contained in the fundamental structure of all reality. But ideal being as such is not the structure of reality, nor does the structure of reality consist completely of it.

There is an important distinction between reality and ideality. All that is real, is individual, irretrievable, it happens but once. All that is ideal, is general, it returns, it exists permanently. Because of this difference, sublimity is often ascribed to ideality, regarding it as higher and better than reality. This is completely wrong from the ontological point of view. On the contrary, Mathematics, e.g., does not deal with a very high, but with a rather low stratum of the universe. Overrating ideality for its eternity and immortality, reveals a bloodless mind, a blind longing for something unknown. Reality, being individual, is coloured and rich.

The values met with in life cannot last, because they are real. They are actualised in that which is mortal.

The ontological field is indeed deeply ploughed by these four preliminary investigations, and the soil seems well prepared for the new Ontology, to which the author will devote the three following volumes.

DORA PEYSER.

YOUR MIND AND MINE. By R. B. Cattell, M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D.
London: Harrap & Co., Ltd. 1934. Pp. 308. 7s. 6d. net.

Introductions to psychology fall into two main classes, those which set out to give a simple account of a particular type of theory, and those, on the other hand, which aim at being encyclopædic in character. Dr. Cattell's book is of the second class, but he does not fall into the error of overwhelming the reader with superficial accounts of the entire field of psychology as envisaged by members of the various schools of thought. He ably distinguishes the main threads in recent psychological research and presents a clear and reasonably detailed account of these principal developments. Thus the "enquiring layman or prospective student" for whom the work is intended can appreciate the leading issues and grasp the outlines of the subject in a manner impossible where the attempt is made to determine the field by presenting a superficial account of all its contents.

The four main themes developed in Dr. Cattell's book are the body-mind relationship, intelligence and its measurement, passion and impulse, and "applied psychology". We observe, of course, that outstanding weakness of modern psychology, the tendency to accept conclusions so long as they are consistent within a limited field, without sufficient concern for their interrelations with other discoveries. Thus if, as Dr. Cattell maintains, the mind is essentially a group of interacting impulses or passions, precisely what place does intelligence hold in it and what is the significance of *g* and *s* in the interplay of impulse? Spearman's theories imply a theory of mind substantially different from the MacDougall-

Freud conception of it, and this contradiction demands resolution if a consistent theory of psychology is to be developed. Similarly Dr. Cattell quite rightly refuses to accept Cubberley's bodily tension theory of the dream and pertinently inquires why the one type of tension should produce dreams of different characters, and, further, why the dreams should take the precise form they do assume. Nevertheless, he accepts the relation of aphasia and apraxia to local lesions in the brain without sufficient enquiry as to why the disturbance of speech or action takes its specific form. The cases he mentions of men who, after injury, lose certain skills, e.g., the ability to sign their names or raise their hats, are surely susceptible of explanations other than the local destruction theory. Dr. Cattell, however, does take Lashley seriously, and although in consequence his description of the nervous system lacks that neat diagrammatic finality to which we are accustomed, this honesty makes it possible for the student to realise just how controversial these questions still are.

By far the most important section is the central group of chapters, constituting over half the book, concerned with the nature of mind and of abnormal mental conditions. The work of Freud, to which the author devotes three chapters, is summarised with rare succinctness and completeness. Dr. Cattell is free from that prudishness which commonly seizes upon text-book writers and, in consequence, he can give a detailed presentation of Freud's theory of dreams with examples which really exemplify, unlike those bowdlerised interpretations which merely lead the mind back to the popular dream-book. His interrelation of Freud and MacDougall gives some indication of the points of contact between these two theories, and removes the author from the class of those who assume that Freud's work is only important to the student of the mentally diseased.

The omissions which Dr. Cattell makes are equally significant. Those epistemological questions which have been for too long the staple fare of the elementary book receive

scarcely any treatment. The word "cognition" does not even appear in the index. Attention, habits, fatigue are barely mentioned. All these considerations are secondary to the important issue "what is mind?" and can only be treated once this question has been fully discussed; we cannot settle these issues separately. They are all *relations* of mind and the *character* of mind is the basic consideration.

This explanation will not hold for certain other omissions, which detract from the value of the author's discussion. To treat Fabre fully but neglect the Peckhams and to discuss tropisms without mention of Jennings is to leave the reader with a completely false impression of contemporary opinion on the issue of the invariability of animal instincts. Again, the classification of instincts follows MacDougall too slavishly. These weaknesses are connected with the general tendency of text-books to avoid the presentation of conflicting positions so that the reader will not be confused. The result of these tactics is to leave the student with the impression that the statements of the text are final and constitute the gospel of psychology, whereas it is surely necessary for an elementary text-book to indicate that there are problems to be solved, the value of such a book consisting precisely in the incitement it offers to further study.

On the formal side, the book is notable for the excellence of its illustrations, which really assist the elucidation of the text, especially the sections on child psychology and mental abnormality. Brief personal details of the leading thinkers are another feature of the treatment. The text is not unduly crowded with the names of minor contributors to psychological theory, their contentions often being discussed without precise reference to their source. The absence of precise references, of any bibliography and even of the names of standard works in the text itself, lowers the value of the book for the student, and is connected, again, with the assumption of finality. Nevertheless, Dr. Cattell's consistently interesting treatment of his subject and his grasp of the fundamental issues should lead his readers on to further investigation.

J.A.P.

SUR LE PRINCIPE DU TIERS EXCLU. By M. Barzin and A. Errera (*Archives de la Société Belge de Philosophie*). Brussels: Stevens, 1929. Pp. 26. Price: 3 fr.

This is an earlier issue in the series containing W. Rivier's "L'Empirisme dans les Sciences Exactes", which was previously noticed in this Journal and which also deals with the "Law of Excluded Middle". The reference in both cases is particularly to the work of Brouwer, who imagines that he is supporting empiricism in mathematics by refusing to accept this "law".

Barzin and Errera, having previously criticised Brouwer's views in a communication to the Académie royale de Belgique (published in the *Bulletin de la Classe des Sciences*, 1927), are here replying to a number of criticisms by supporters of Brouwer, and have no difficulty in showing the weakness of these rejoinders—in effect, that they *assume* "excluded middle", as is bound to be done in any argument at all. At the same time, these matters will never be satisfactorily cleared up until it is acknowledged that there is no "Law of Identity" or "Law of Contradiction" or "Law of Excluded Middle", that there are simply states of affairs which can be made *issues* and in relation to which people can be right or wrong.

In the most important section (V) of this paper, the authors, starting from the Frege-Russell theory of implication and disjunction, arrive at the position that *p* implies *p* is equivalent to *not-p* or *p* (viz., by substituting *p* for *q* in the usual formula), and thus that the law of excluded middle is equivalent to the law of identity. Accordingly, they say: "Ou bien M. Brouwer doit rejeter, s'il se réfugie dans notre analyse de l'implication, la légitimité de la tautologie, *et sans tautologie, plus de langage ni de pensée*; ou bien il doit admettre, en même temps, ce pauvre principe du tiers exclu contre lequel il fulmine depuis tant d'années." (Our italics.) They admit, however, that Brouwer would have another resource, viz., to deny the equivalence in question and to assert that *p* implies *q* is equivalent to *not-p* or *p'* or *q*, where *p'* is the assertion that *p* is "tierce" (neither true nor false). And they devote an appendix to showing formally that even this equivalence implies excluded middle. It appears to the reviewer that here the authors have made a blunder at the beginning by omitting a negative sign, and that their conclusion that when a proposition is "tierce", it is either true or false, should be that when a proposition is *not* "tierce", it is either true or false—a conclusion which would presumably satisfy Brouwer, though one of his supporters, Alonzo Church (answered in section III), thinks there need not even be a law of "excluded fourth".

In fact, it is only by some kind of blunder or ambiguity that anything could appear to follow from tautologies or that they could seem to be of any use for thought. No amount of juggling with the notions of truth and falsity can get away from the fact that we understand them only in relation to an issue—"is it so or not?" To set up "laws" in these terms is therefore entirely superfluous; we already have the distinction between the affirmative and the negative copula, and that is all we require. In regard to implication Russell himself admits ("Principles of Mathematics", p. 14) that we cannot define it in terms of truth and falsity, since "truth and falsehood give us merely new implications". But also his view that a false proposition implies all propositions and a true proposition is implied by all propositions, is based on confusion; "*p* implies *q* when *either p is false or q is true*" is not the same as "*p* implies *q* either when *p* is false or when *q* is true". The most that can be made of Russell's position is that, whatever else is true, a true proposition is true, and that, if a false proposition were true, anything might be true; but these are mere *facetiae* and have nothing to do with implication.—J.A.